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ABSTRACT

This book is an interpretive history of the organizational revolution that took place in American schooling during the 19th century, its politics and ideology. It attempts to assess how the schools shaped, and were shaped by, the transformation of the United States into an urban-industrial nation. It looks at the shift from village school to urban system using a variety of social perspectives and modes of analysis. "Community control" in the rural and village school (a pattern of governance followed by many of the early city schools) is analyzed first. Then, the development of ideological and organizational consensus in the search for an urban educational order is traced--a process frequently complicated by heterogeneous values among the urban populations and diffusion of power in school governance. Next, the author deals with the centralization of education (1890-1920); and reformist emphasis on expertise, efficiency, and the disinterested public service of elites. Case studies of four cities offer variations on the central theme and analyze the opposition to centralization. Finally, some of the major changes (1890-1940), the appearance of more complex educational structures and new specializations, and the development of a "technology of discrimination" are described. The author stresses that it is the persistence of historical myths and problems that today stands in the way of realistic reform of urban education. An extensive bibliography is included. (Author/WM)

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FINAL REPORT

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FROM VILLAGE SCHOOL TO URBAN SYSTEM:
A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

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DEDICATION

To My Students --
Past, Present, and Future

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PREFACE

For many years, and intensively for the last five, I have been trying to understand how urban schooling developed and with what consequences. A long search of this kind has neither an arbitrary beginning nor end: this report represents what I could put on paper by September 1, 1972 and constitutes what I have concluded thus far, together with some indications of the remainder of the analysis.

Often historians find that immersion in primary sources alters their conception of the problems they investigate, changing not only the details of the story but often the basic questions they ask. Such has been my experience. I sought originally to examine northern urban education of black Americans and collected a mass of evidence (which I intend to edit for the use of others). But the deeper I went, the more the important puzzle seemed to be how the _system_ of education itself developed, since both individuals and groups -- like blacks -- were subordinated to the organization. One could not understand the effects of schools on children without first understanding how schools operated, who controlled them, for what ends.

This report, then deals primarily with the political and administrative history of urban schools, although I have also tried to incorporate the perspectives of many diverse social groups on urban systems. I am planning to supplement this kind of history with more "views from below." In a final section I will examine changes since 1940 and comment on alternatives available today.

I am much indebted to the United States Office of Education and to the Carnegie Corporation for their generous grants supporting this research. My debts to individuals are but partially indicated in my footnotes. I intend to give more full acknowledgement of them in the future.

* * * * * *

PROLOGUE

This is an interpretive history of the organizational revolution that took place in American schooling during the last century. It deals with the politics of education: who got what, where, when, and how. It explores some of the changes in institutional structure and ideology in education and what these meant in practice to the generations of Americans who passed through classrooms. And it attempts to assess how the schools shaped, and were shaped by, the transformation of the United States into an urban-industrial nation.

I intend this study to be exploratory and tentative. In a sense this synthesis is premature since a new generation of talented scholars is directing its attention to monographic studies of urban schooling and will enrich our knowledge of how schools actually operated. I am deeply indebted to this contemporary scholarship, much of it still in unpublished form. But there is also a mass of earlier empirical investigation into the character of urban education -- gathered for purposes other than historical interpretation -- that yields useful insights when subjected to new analytic questions and value perspectives. What I am attempting here is a dovetailing of old and new scholarship, together with my own research, into a general interpretive framework. If the book prompts others to contest or refine its explanations, to make its periodization more precise, to describe missing dimensions, so much the better.

I am addressing this study not only to specialists but also to citizens curious and concerned about how we arrived at the present crisis in urban education. We stand at a point in time when we need better to understand those educational institutions and values we have taken for granted. Unless one denies the possibility of human choice, ideas, people and institutions might have developed differently in history. We need to turn facts into puzzles in order to perceive alternatives both in the past and the present. The way we understand that past profoundly shapes how we make choices today.

Any historical writing perforce does violence to the kaleidoscopic surface and hidden dynamics of everyday life. The same "reality" may appear quite different to diverse groups and individuals. That fact alone destroys the possibility of a single objective account of the meaning of events to various people. Much of the written history of schools has revealed the perspective of those at the top of the educational and social system. We need as well to try to examine urban education from the bottom up as students, parents and teachers saw it and from the point of view of clients who were victimized by their poverty, their color, their cultural differences. Accordingly I have tried to look at urban schooling from the varying perspectives of several social groups, realizing that their views of the world were real to each of them although perhaps not to others.[1]

At the same time, I am attempting to analyze a system of schooling that by and large did not operate in haphazard ways. When I began this study I wanted to tell the story of urban education from the point of view of those who were in some sense its victims, the poor and the dispossessed. I soon realized, however, that what was needed was not another tale of classroom horror, for we have a plethora of those, but rather an attempt to interpret the broader political process and the social system of schooling that made such victimization predictable and regular -- in short, systematic. Behind slogans that mask power -- like "keep the schools out of politics" -- and myths that rationalize inequality -- like the doctrines of ethnic inferiority -- lie institutional systems called schools that often reinforced injustice for some at the same time that they offered opportunity to others.

In trying to interpret how these systems operated, what were the patterns of communication and decision-making, what were the various political fields of forces influencing the schools, I have drawn heavily on sociologists and political scientists.[2] Historians, I suppose, have increasingly become cuckoo-birds who lay their scholarly eggs in the nests of other disciplines. One reason is that some theories in social science lead us to new sorts of data, to kinds of interpretation that are more open to proof or disproof than the traditional narrative. While most historians still enjoy, as I do, the colorful, complex reality of specific episodes, the explanatory models of social science theory help us to distinguish what is general and what is particular in historical events -- and sometimes even why.

Another way to put particular developments into a broader frame is through comparison -- over time, or place, or social or economic composition.[3] The history of urban education is rich in such contrasts: of size and location; of the same community at different periods; of different ethnic groups and classes; and of similar organizations and occupational groups, such as welfare bureaucracy or police. Some writers imply that urban education is New York or Boston writ large; but any resident of Portland, Oregon, could testify that such is not the case. The city school does not exist, and never did.

Through using a variety of social perspectives and modes of analysis, I have sought to illuminate the central theme suggested in the title of the book: the transformation from village school to urban system. I am using "village" and "urban" as shorthand labels for the highly complex changes in ways of thinking and behaving that accompanied revolutions in technology, increasing concentrations of people in cities, and restructuring of economic and political institutions into large bureaucracies. Thoughtful educators -- men like Horace Mann, William T. Harris, John Dewey, among others -- were aware that the functions of schooling were shifting in response to these "modernizing" forces. As village patterns merged into urbanism as a way of life, factories and counting houses split the place of work from the home; impersonal and codified roles structured relationships in organizations, replacing diffuse and personal role relationships familiar in the village; the jack-of-all trades of the rural community came to perform specialized tasks in the city; the older reliance on tradition and folkways as guides to belief and conduct shifted as mass media provided new sources of information and norms of behavior and as science became a pervasive source of authority; people increasingly defined themselves as members of occupational groups -- salesmen, teachers, engineers -- as they became aware of common interests that transcended allegiance to particular communities (the growth of what Robert Wiebe calls "the new middle class").[4]

The change from village to urban ways of thinking and acting was by no means linear or unbroken. Citizens might have one standard of behavior for the public world of job and interaction with strangers, quite another for the private world of kinship, neighborhood, and religious associations. In the midst of large cities in the mid-twentieth century one might find what Herbert Gans calls "urban villagers," just as in small towns in the nineteenth century one might encounter cosmopolitan individuals totally unconcerned with local affairs and standards of morality. In the twentieth century, in particular, it became clear to many observers that small towns were becoming intertwined with the networks of influence that emanated from the centers of mass society, the cities, while cities continued to recruit citizens from isolated rural areas where the traditional folkways were still strong. The important point is that increasingly the changes in the means of production, in the forms of human association and decision-making, and in ways of thinking and acting that I have labeled "urban" became central in the lives of most Americans.[5]

Schools reflected and shaped these changes in various ways. One was in the governance of education, as lay community control gave way to the corporate-bureaucratic model under the guise of "taking the schools out of politics." Educators developed systems whose specialized structures broadly imitated the differentiation of social and economic roles outside. As employers and occupational associations placed ever greater reliance on educational credentials for jobs, schooling acquired a new importance as the gateway to favored positions. And increasingly the school developed a curriculum, overt and implicit, that served as a bridge between the family and the corporate world beyond -- that is, helped to create an urban discipline.[6]

This book begins with an analysis of "community control" versus "professionalism" in the rural and village school. Why examine rural education in a study which focuses mostly on urban education? In the first place, during the mid-nineteenth century the pattern of school governance in many cities followed a village or rural model. Therefore, understanding the transaction of school and community in the countryside helps us to look afresh at decentralized decision-making in cities of a century ago. Second, the bureaucratic models developed to reform city schools became educational blueprints for consolidation of rural education in the early twentieth century. Hence the process of consolidation of rural schools illustrates in microcosm many of the shifts occurring in cities and sketches in sharp relief the values underlying the transfer of power to the professionals.

In part two, I trace the complex contest between educational leaders who sought to develop the "one best system" of urban education during the nineteenth century and those dissenters and political interests that often conflicted with their efforts. Gradually schoolmen developed ideological and organizational consensus in their search for educational order, but heterogeneous values among the urban populations and diffusion of power in school governance frequently complicated their task.

Part three deals with the campaign of reform from the top down that characterized urban education during the years from 1890 to 1920. At that time an interlocking directorate of urban elites -- largely business and professional men, university presidents and professors, and some "progressive" superintendents -- joined forces to centralize the control of schools. They campaigned to select small boards composed of "successful" people, to employ the corporate board of directors as the model for school committees, and to delegate to "experts" (the superintendent and his staff) the power to make most decisions concerning the schools. Part and parcel of urban "progressivism" generally, this movement glorified expertise, efficiency, and the disinterested public service of elites. Case studies of four cities -- New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and San Francisco -- offer variations on the central theme and analyze the opposition to centralization. Of course, actual political behavior under the new arrangements often departed sharply from the norms justifying the structural reforms.

Part four presents some of the major changes in urban education during the half-century from 1890 to 1940 as perceived by educators and the public they served. During these years the structures of school systems grew complex and often huge, new specializations appeared, conceptions of the nature of "intelligence" and learning shifted, and schools occupied a far larger place in the lives of youth (partly because child labor laws eliminated jobs and more and more employees required certificates and credentials). Schoolmen developed a technology of discrimination at the very time when schooling began to matter most in the occupational world. Such transformations of traditional ideas and practices looked quite different depending on one's position in the social structure. Consequently, in this section of the book I have especially emphasized these private meanings of education. Reminiscences of an Italian-American about his childhood, for example, shed light on statistics of school drop-outs; descriptions of the job ceiling for black youth and point to dilemmas of vocational counselors; a teacher's account of supervision by a principal may contradict the progressive rhetoric in the curriculum guide. By its very nature, this section of the book will be episodic, reflecting the diversity inherent in personal views of reality.

Finally, in the part called "Alternatives," I will look briefly at the present crisis in urban education in the light of the structures, the power relationships, and the ideologies that developed in the last century. If it is wise to be suspicious of historical prescriptions, it is foolish to ignore the storehouse of experience accumulated in the past. Few of the current panaceas or proposals for reform are new -- accountability, or community control, or "compensatory education," for example; and power struggles in urban education have an old lineage, however successfully they may have been disguised. If the record of educational reform in city schools is in some respects a discouraging one, it is perhaps because the schools have been asked to do too much or because inadequate solutions were implicit in simplistic definitions of what constituted the problems.

This book focuses, then, mostly on public schools in big cities. A generation ago no historian of education would have needed to justify concentrating his attention on public institutions. To writers like Ellwood P. Cubberley and the scholars who preceded and followed him, the topic was the evolution of public education. When they talked of urban schools, they told a triumphant "house history" of enlarging enrollments, increasing expenditures, expanding curricula, growing professionalism, and widening opportunities for children. The major purpose of educational history was to give teachers and administrators a greater sense of professional esprit and identity. It was a tale of progress, marred here and there by "politics" or meddling by special interest groups or backward-looking teachers or laymen. It was an insider's fiew, seen from the top down. From that perspective the narrative was fairly accurate. Most would agree that in comparison with 1900 or 1850, teachers today are better trained, school buildings are commodious, classes smaller, methods of teaching more varied, and students retained in school far longer.

Today, this inspirational institutional history suffers from two disabilities: it is inspirational, while the tone of much writing on urban schools has become funereal or angry; and it is institutional in focus when a number of educational historians are arguing that education is far broader than schooling. In a moment I shall discuss the tone and temper of this book, but now I should like to explain why I believe it is useful to look at institutions. I concede that much "education" takes place outside schools and that it is valuable for historians to examine the family, the church, the media, and many other educative agencies. Still, historians need a familiar place to stand -- firm ground whose contours they know -- in order to look out on society. Institutions provide just such a standing point. Furthermore, as social scientists remind us, modern America has become an organizational society in which our lives have been increasingly influenced by large institutions. Although these organizations shape and are shaped by the larger social system, they also have an internal momentum and life of their own which influences the behavior of their members. Thus analysis of urban schools can offer a way to ask questions about the whole society while retaining a particular institutional focus. And "institutional history" need not be "house history" but can be broad and multi-faceted.

Now the issue of tone and perspective. I do not support either the euphoric glorification of public education as represented in the traditional historiography or the current fashion of berating public school people and regarding the common school as failure. Thoreau once sardonically described a reformer who had written "a book called 'A Kiss for a Blow,'" and who "behaved as if there were no alternative between these ...."[7] That seems to describe many books about schools.

It is fashionable today to impugn the motives of reformers generally, and school leaders have not escaped charges that they were seeking "social control" or "imposing" their views on their victims, the pupils. Such accusations are impossible to deny so long as the epithets remain vague (just as the "failure" of the schools is patent if judged by certain criteria, such as providing genuine equality of opportunity or joyful days for children). "Social control" exists in some form in every organized society from the Bushmen to the Esquimau, and in every epoch of recorded history. To announce that schools "impose" on students is hardly news; even the "free school" movement shows signs of recognizing that.[8] The important questions, I believe, are the intent, methods, and effects of the social control or imposition which can take diverse forms. I would argue that it is morally and educationally quite different to force a Catholic child to read the King James Bible against the teachings of his parents and priest than to try to make him literate; quite different to teach an Italian boy at twelve that he is "stupid" by acting on the results of defective intelligence tests than to urge him to go to school rather than work in a sweatshop; quite different to whip children for not learning their lessons than to teach them to be punctual. One may have legitimate doubts about literacy, compulsory schooling, and punctuality, but they should at least be distinguished from religious bigotry, exploitation, and sadism as forms of "imposition."

In some of the recent polemical literature about the schools -- I am thinking, for example, of Jonathan Kozol's Death at an Early Age or Edgar Z. Fridenberg's Coming of Age in America -- there seems to me to be an animus against the lower-middle-class teacher that is uncharitable and insidious.[9] Critics are so intent on exposing the racism and obtuseness of the teacher that it is difficult to understand her view of the world. Like welfare workers and police, the teachers in the urban colonies of the poor are part of a social system that shapes their behavior, too. It is the injustices of the social system that need to be exposed and changed, not simply the agents who need to be scolded. Indeed, one of the chief reasons for the failures of educational reforms of the past has been precisely that it called for a change of philosophy or tactics on the part of the individual school employee rather than a change in the educational system -- and concurrent transformations in the distribution of power and wealth in the socety as a whole.

I do not share the view that urban schools have abysmally declined; this is an exaggeration as misleading as the mindless optimism of those who recently saw only progress. Nor do I share the opinion that urban education is some crumbling structure ready to tumble at the blast of a Joshua's trumpet; with its vested interests and crucial role in modern society, urban education is more like the Great Wall of China than like the Walls of Jericho. What is new today -- and valuable -- is the extent to which Americans now realize how desperately the schools, like other institutions, are failing to promote equal opportunity and social justice.

In this book I shall stress persistent myths and problems, not because there have been no triumphs, but because it is the legacy of myths and problems that stands in the way today of realistic reform. In particular I shall emphasize these central themes:

> that the search for the "one best system" of education has neglected the pluralistic nature of American society.
>
> that increasing bureaucratization of urban schools has often resulted in a displacement of goals which perpetuated positions and outworn practices rather than serving the clients, the children to be educated.
>
> that despite the rhetoric of "equal educational opportunity," the schools have rarely served the poor effectively; this failure has been systematic, not idiosyncratic.

that the ideology of "keeping the schools of politics" has often served the groups that actually benefited from control of schooling.

That Americans have often excused their own failures or perpetuated social injustice by blaming the victims, particularly in the case of institutionalized racism.

There have been important, and heartening, exceptions to these generalizations, and many people have, as I do, genuinely ambivalent feelings about such issues as professional autonomy or politicized schools. Furthermore, it is clear that many educators in the past sought "the one best system" or centralized control of city schools with the best of conscious motives. Rarely did these developments emerge in covert ways or for purposes which the proponents thought dubious. The search for conspiracies or villains is a fruitless occupation; to the extent that there was deception, it was largely self-deception. But to say that institutionalized racism, or unequal treatment of the poor, or cultural chauvinism were unconscious or unintentional does not erase or excuse their effects on children.

Urban schools did not create the injustices of American urban life, although they had a systematic part in perpetuating them. It is an old and idle hope to believe that better education alone can remedy them. Yet in the old goal of a common school, reinterpreted in radically reformed institutions, lies a legacy essential to a quest for social justice.

PART I

THE TRIBE AND THE COMMON SCHOOL: COMMUNITY CONTROL IN RURAL EDUCATION

PART I.

THE TRIBE AND THE COMMON SCHOOL: COMMUNITY CONTROL IN RURAL EDUCATION

1. Introduction

"Want to be a school-master, do you? Well, what would you do in Flat Crick deestrict, I'd like to know? Why, the boys have driv off the last two, and licked the one afore them like blazes." Facing the brawny school trustee, his bulldog, his giggling daughter and muscular son, the young applicant, Ralph Hartsook, felt he had dropped "into a den of wild beasts." In The Hoosier School-master, Edward Eggleston pitted his hero-teacher Hartsook against a tribe of barbarians and hypocrites, ignorant, violent, sinister, in a conflict relieved only by a sentimental love story and a few civilized allies.[1] Across the nation, in Ashland, Oregon, a father named B. Million wrote a letter to the town teacher, Oliver Cromwell Applegate:

> Sir:
> I am vary sorry to informe that in my opinion you have Shoed to me that you are unfit to keep a School, if you hit my boy in the face accidentley that will be different but if on purpos Sir you are unfit for the Business, you Seam to punish the Small Scholars to Set a Sample for the big wons that is Rong in the first place Sir Make your big class set the Sample for the little ones Sir is the course you Should do in my opinion Sir[2]

The imaginary Ralph Hartsook and the real Oliver Cromwell Applegate triumphed over their adversaries, but in common with other rural teachers they learned some meanings of "community control."

Community control of schools became anathema to many of the educational reformers of 1900, like other familiar features of the country school: nongraded primary education, instruction of younger children by older, flexible scheduling, and a lack of bureaucratic buffers between teacher and patrons. As advocates of consolidation, bureaucratization and professionalization of rural education, school leaders in the 20th century have given the one-room school a bad press, and not without reason. Some farmers were willing to have their children spend their schooldays in buildings not fit for cattle. In all too many neighborhoods it was only ne'er-do-wells or ignoramuses who would teach for a pittance under the eye and thumb of the community.

Children suffered blisters from slab seats and welts from birch rods, sweltered near the pot-bellied stove or froze in the drafty corners. And the meagerness of formal schooling in rural areas seriously handicapped youth who migrated to a complex urban-industrial society.

At the turn of the century, leading schoolmen began to argue that a community-dominated and essentially provincial form of education would no longer equip youth to deal either with the changed demands of agriculture itself or with the complex nature of citizenship in a technological, urban society. Formal schooling had to play a much greater part -- indeed a compulsory and major part, they believed -- in the total education of the country child just as it did for the city pupil. They wished to enforce in rural schools the same standards of professionalism that had been slowly developing in the cities. While they justified their program as public service, educators also sought greater power and status for themselves.

Because professional educators have dominated writing about rural schools, it is difficult to look at these institutions freshly from other perspectives. Schoolmen saw clearly the deficiencies but not the virtues of the one-room school. Schooling -- which farmers usually associated with book learning -- was only a small, and to many, an incidental part of the total education the community provided. The child acquired his values and skills from his family and from neighbors of all ages and conditions. The major vocational curriculum was work on the farm or in the craftsman's shop or the corner store; civic and moral instruction came mostly in church or home or around the village where people met to gossip or talk politics. A child growing up in such a community could see work-family-religion-recreation-school as an organically related system of human relationships. Most reminiscences of the rural school are highly favorable, especially in comparison with personal accounts of schooling in the city, although writers like Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Lee Masters, Hamlin Garland and Edward Eggleston have testified that life in the country could be harsh and drab, the tribe tyrannical in its demands for conformity, cultural opportunities sparse and career options pinched.[3]

We shall begin by looking at some of the latent functions of the rural school which help to account for differences in perspective of professional educators and local residents; examine the complex interaction of teacher and community; analyze the curriculum as a bridge to the larger world outside; and last, inspect the "Rural School Problem" as perceived by educational reformers at the turn of the century. This transformation of rural education into a consolicated and bureaucratized institution both reflected, and in microcosm illuminated, a broader change in educational ideology and

and structure. Beginning in the cities, this organizational revolution set the pattern for public education in the 20th century, in the countryside and metropolis alike.

2. The School as a Community and the Community as a School

During the 19th century the country school belonged to the community in more than a legal sense: it was frequently the focus for their lives outside the home. An early settler of Prairie View, Kansas, wrote that its capitol "was a small white-painted building which was not only the schoolhouse, but the center -- educational, social, dramatic, political, and religious -- of a pioneer community of the prairie region of the West."[4] In one-room schools all over the nation ministers met their flocks, politicians caucused with the faithful, families gathered for Christmas parties and hoe-downs, the Grange held its baked-bean suppers, Lyceum lecturers spoke, itinerants introduced the wonders of the lantern-slide and the crank-up phonograph, and neighbors gathered to hear spelling-bees and declamations.

Daily in school season, children could play with one another at noon, sliding on snowy hills or playing blind man's bluff with the teacher on a bright May day. "The principal allurement of going to schools," said one student, "was the opportunity it afforded for social amusement."[5] For ranch children growing up on the dry plains of western Texas or eastern Wyoming, separated from their neighbors by many miles, school often provided the only social contacts they had outside the family.[6]

Indeed, sometimes the school itself became a kind of young extended family. When Oliver Cromwell Applegate taught in Ashland, four of his pupils were Applegates; when his niece taught 30 years later in Dairy, Oregon, she found that "the majority of children were my own sisters and cousins."[7] Students ranged widely in age. A teacher found on his first day of school in Eastport, Maine, "a company including three men ... each several years my senior; several young men of about the same age, one of whom seemed to have been more successful than Ponce de Leon in the search for the fountain of perpetual youth, for, according to the records of the school, she had been eighteen years old for five successive years; and from that, grading down to the class sometimes, in those times, called 'trundle-bed trash'."[8] Mothers often sent children of three and four years to school with their older sisters or brothers. A young one might play with the counting frame of beads, look at pictures in the readers, or nap on a pine bench, using the teacher's shawl as a pillow. Older boys often split wood and lit the fire; girls might roast apples in the stove at noon.

But unlike the family, the school was a voluntary and incidental institution: attendance varied enormously from day to day and season to season, depending on the weather, the need for labor at home and the affection or terror inspired by the teacher. During the winter, when older boys attended, usually a man held sway, or tried to. During the summer, when older children worked on the farm, a woman was customarily the teacher.[9]

As one of the few social institutions which rural people encountered daily, the common school both reflected and shaped a sense of community. Families of a neighborhood were usually a loosely organized tribe; social and economic roles were overlapping, unspecialized, familiar. School and community were organically related in a tightly knit group in which people met face-to-face and all knew each others' affairs. If families of a district were amicable, the school expressed their cohesiveness. If they were discordant, the school was often squeezed between warring cliques. Sometimes schooling itself became a source of contention, resulting in factions or even the creation of new districts. A common cause for argument was the location of the school. "To settle the question of where one of the little frame schoolhouses should stand," wrote Clifton Johnson about New England, "has been known to require ten district meetings scattered over a period of two years" and to draw out men from the mountains who never voted in presidential elections.[10] In Iowa, dissident farmers secretly moved a schoolhouse one night to their preferred site a mile away from its old foundation.[11] In tiny Yoncalla, Oregon, feuds split the district into three factions, each of which tried to maintain its own school.[12] Other sources of discord included the selection of the teacher -- even that small patronage mattered in rural areas -- or the kind of religious instruction offered in the classroom. But more often than not, the rural school integrated rather than disintegrated the community.

3. Teachers and Patrons

Relations between rural communities and teachers depended much on personalities, little on formal status. Most rural patrons had little doubt that the school was theirs to control (whatever state regulations might say) and not the property of the professional educator. Still, a powerful or much-loved teacher in a one-room school might achieve great influence through force of character, persuasion and sabotage.

A pioneer teacher in Oregon recalled that a school board member instructed her not to teach grammar, so she taught children it indirectly through language and literature. Another Oregon teacher followed the state course of study which required her to have the children write their script from the bottom of the page up "in order to see the copy at the top of the page." An irate committeeman warned her that "if you don't have the kids write from the top down, I'll have you fired." He won. But when other trustees objected to building two privies -- one for boys and one for girls, as the state law said -- the same teacher convinced them to comply by showing it would cost only twenty dollars.[13]

Finding his schoolhouse "strewn with bits of paper, whittlings and tobacco" from a community meeting the night before, a young Kansas teacher decided he "would go to that board and demand that the schoolroom be put in sanitary condition, and state the school would not be called till my demands were complied with." He quickly learned that in this village, where three teachers had failed the year before, educational law might be on his side but the patrons could only be managed, not bossed. "Look with suspicion upon the teacher who tells you how he bosses the school board," he observed. "He is either a liar or a one-termer, and the probabilities are that he is both."[14]

Teachers knew to whom they were accountable: the school trustees who hired them, the parents and patrons, the children whose respect -- and perhaps even affection -- they needed to win. Usually young, inexperienced and poorly trained, teachers were sometimes no match for the older pupils. When a principal lost a fight with an unruly student in Klamath Falls, Oregon, it was he and not the student who was put on probation by the board -- presumably for losing, not for fighting (which was common).[15]

The position of the teacher in the tribal school was tenuous. In isolated communities, patrons expected teachers to conform to their folkways.[16] In fact if not in law, local school committeemen were usually free to select instructors. With no bureaucracy to serve as buffer between himself and the patrons, with little sense of being part of a professional establishment, the teacher found himself subordinated to the community. Authority inhered in the person, not the office, of schoolmaster. The roles of teachers were overlapping, familiar, personal, rather than esoteric, strictly defined and official (the same teacher in a rural school might be brother, suitor, hunting companion, fellow farm worker, boarder and cousin to different members of the class). The results of his instruction, good or poor, were evident in Friday spelling bees and declamations as neighbors crowded the schoolhouse to see the show. If he "boarded 'round" at the houses of the parents, even his leisure hours were under scrutiny.

If he were a local boy, his faults and virtues were public knowledge, and a rival local aspirant to the office of village schoolmaster might find ways to make his life unpleasant. If he were an outsider, he would have to prove himself, while the patrons waited with ghoulish glee, as in The Hoosier School-master, to see if the big boys would throw him out. Romance was sometimes as threatening as brawn. Matrimony stalked one Yoncalla teacher: "It was not the fault of the Yoncalla 'gals' that the young Gent ... escaped here in single blessedness. It was a manoueuvre of his own. He was attacked on several occasions mostly in the usually quiet manner but one time furiously, but he artfully overlooked the gauntlet and was not carried away ...."[17] Against the tyranny of public opinion the teacher had little recourse; against the wiles of the scholars he had as allies only his muscles, his wit and his charm.[18]

4. The Curriculum as Bridge to the World Outside

In most one-room schools the teacher mediated between the folkways of the community and the outside world represented in the textbooks. His scholars read books written by men from afar who told of distant lands, who painted gaudy panoramas of virtue and vice, who talked in language never heard on the playground or in the country store. For millions of children who would migrate to cities, school was the first taste of life outside the tribe. Textbook writers took no chances of confusing the children with wishy-washy morality. The rules were clear: NEVER DRINK; NEVER SMOKE; WORK HARD; OBEY AUTHORITY. And the message got across, at least in the official morality of the students' public declarations and themes. Hear a few of these from Oliver Applegate's school in the 1860's.

On work:

> Idleness is a sin, yet there are a great many who will idle away their time; and what do they gain? What kind of men and women will boys and girls make if they give themselves up to idleness? I will tell you what I think: They will be lazy good-for-nothing men and women. The men they boys will become, will sit in the Bar room while their families are left in dark cellars to starve.

On liquor:

> To be happy you must never taste strong drink it is very wrong to taste strong drink always take water in place of it and you will feel much better.

On ambition, two views:

> Every man must patiently abid his time. He must wait; not in listless ideleness, not in listless pastime, but in constant, steady, cheerful endeavor, always willing, fulfilling his task,

> 'that when the occasion comes he may be equal to the occasion.'
>
> I have determined to be somebody when I come to be a man. I don't think I can ever consent to be tied down to a yard stick, or watch the tiresome motions of a sawmill. I'll climb the ladder of fame. I may go away up, and then come down 'ker-spat.' But what of that, we are bound to have our ups and downs in this world anyway.[19]

And hear a young man in New York faithfully echo the morality of the school readers:

> Boy, or young man, whose eyes hover over these lines! how much of your leisure time do you give to loafing? What vulgar habits of smoking cigars, chewing toabcco, or making frequent use of blasphemous or obscene language have you begun to form? What associations and appetites are you idly falling into, that future years will ripen in wickedness or shame? Consider these questions as addressed, not to everybody in general, but to you, in particular -- and answer them honestly to your own heart.[20]

The author was Walt Whitman, writing earnestly, not facetiously, in 1845. Even Clarence Darrow, who grew up in a rural community in Ohio but whose later career would have made him an anti-hero to McGuffey, recalled that most children swallowed whole the stories of Providential payola in the textbooks, though the society they saw around them belied the tales.[21]

Not only morality but correct diction armed the rural child for his foray into the world beyond the local school. Some teachers sought to teach children a second dialect of English. "Most of our families were emigrants from mid-west farms," recalled a Medford, Oregon pupil, and to the teacher "we came with our colloquialisms: 'git,' 'crik,' 'cain't,' 'fetched' and she patiently drilled us in the use of simple, correct, beautiful English."[22]

Just as humorists joshed Americans about their dialects and spelling, so a comic play called The Country School revealed what the ideal graduate of a country school was not. The roles of the linguistic delinquents and ne'er-do-wells "should be played," said the author, "by prominent citizens ... if such can be prevailed upon to appear -- the more elderly, staid, and incongruous in years and bearing the better. Dignified professors, judges, doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc. should be prevailed upon to forget their present greatness, don the costumes and revive the scenes of their youth." The men who never lit out for the territories became Huck Finns: truants, ignoramuses, liars, dunces when judged by the official standard of knowledge of the school. Misspellings and plays on words furnished most of the jokes, but underlying the drama was the incongruity between the country ways of the community and the high-faluting "culture" of the curriculum. "Next, tell me the meanings of excruciating," one girl was asked: "Excruciating means that natural and peculiar prohibition of undulatory and molecular attraction which encompases the plausibility of capillary promulgation and gelatinous hyperbole, while giving an enallage of paradigms," she glibly replied. Education, the play seems to say, may seem unreal and even ridiculous, but the country child must learn that there were different standards from those that prevailed in his immediate world; outside, people talked differently, thought differently, acted differently. Moral instruction and linguistic propriety armed the child for that world outside -- for the city, for success, for greatness as represented in those figures who condescended in the play to return to their youth in the country school.[23]

Textbooks wedded the dream of wordly success to an absolute morality; cultivation meant proper diction and polite accomplishments. For some children this curriculum gave welcome escape from monotony and horse manure, just as play in the schoolyard relieved the loneliness of farm life. A boy in the Duxbury Community School near Lubbock discovered a passion for literature and later became a professor.[24] Hamlin Garland recalled that in Iowa

> Our readers were almost the only counterchecks to the current of vulgarity and baseness which ran through the talk of the older boys, and I wish to acknowledge my deep obligation to Professor McGuffey, whoever he may have been, for the dignity and literary grace of his selections. From the pages of his readers I learned to know and love the poems of Scott, Byron, Southey, Wordsworth and a long line of the English masters. I got my first taste of Shakespeare from the selected scenes which I read in these books.[25]

Edgar Lee Masters, by contrast, wrote that his school days "were not happy, they did not have a particle of charm ...."[26] And a boy in New England wrote in the flyleaf of his textbook:"11 weeks will never go away/ never never never never."[27]

Whether these rites of passage into the world of books were pleasant depended in large part on the teacher. Though usually poorly educated, the rural teacher was often regarded by the community as an intellectual. It didn't take much to convince him that he was a man of letters. A friend of Applegate's wrote that he had attended a "State Teachers Institute, where there was an immense gathering of the literati -- no less than eleven men with the title of 'Professor' -- and fourteen with the title of Reverend besides about fifty lesser lights."[28] Farmers and pioneers were ambivalent about these literati in their midst. The "old folks" in Yoncalla derided spelling bees and declamations "as a sparking school or some such silly thing." Children often shared their parents' doubts about "all singing schools, Sabbath Schools, Spelling Schools, Grammar Schools and all debating societies."[29] But there lurked in the pioneer a secret bourgeois desire for refinement (at least for the womenfolk). When a teacher could successfully bridge the world of the tribe and the wider world of intellect -- as Oliver Cromwell Applegate did, with his fine penmanship and his skill in hunting grizzly bear -- the community rejoiced.[30]

5. "The Rural School Problem"

Beginning in the 1890s and gaining momentum in the early 20th century, reformers mounted an attack on The Rural School Problem. The "bookish" curriculum, haphazard selection and supervision of teachers, voluntary character of school attendance, discipline problems, diversity of buildings and equipment -- these were but symptoms of deeper problems, they believed. What was basically wrong with rural education was that rural folk wanted to run their schools and didn't know was was good for them in the complex new society. Don't underestimate the job of reform, wrote Ellwood P. Cubberley in 1914: "Because the rural school is today in a state of arrested development, burdened by educational traditions, lacking in effective supervision, controlled largely by rural people, who, too often, do not realize either their own needs or the possibilities of rural education, and taught by teachers who, generally speaking, have but little comprehension of the rural-life problem ... the task of reorganizing and redirecting rural education is difficult, and will necessarily be slow."[31] In their diagnosis and prescription, the rural-school reformers blended economic realism with nostalgia, efficient professionalism with evangelical righteousness. A large number of the crusaders were themselves once country boys and girls, and their writings portrayed a rural past in which families cooperated in barn-raisings and corn huskings, churches and schools flourished, and the yeoman farmer -- whom they called the "standard American" -- ruled over an industrious, moral and peacable republic.[32] A Kansas teacher recalled that President McKinley's train had stopped in the country one September morning next to a field where two barefoot boys had come to milk cows. The boys were warming their feet on the sod where the cows had slept as the President called his Cabinet officers to watch: "Gentlemen, /_said McKinley,_/ that sight recalls the happiest days of my life;' and each cabinet officer in turn expressed a like sentiment, and remembered having warmed his feet in the same way. America's great statesmen then gave three cheers in the early morning for the little boys in Iowa who reminded them of their happiest days."[33]

But when it came time for analysis, the more astute reformers saw that industrialization, demographic shifts and urbanism were altering country life. They argued that now farms were no longer self-sufficient but produced for a world market; agricultural science, the telephone, automobile, Sears Roebuck catalogue, electricity and farm machinery had profoundly transformed the daily routines of rural families. Fewer people produced more food. Ominous, in the view of the rural educators, was the growth of "factories in the field," large commercial, mechanized farms which employed a farm proletariat. And lastly, in many rural states an increasing proportion of farm tenants and proprietors were "new" immigrants. These southern and eastern Europeans, Cubberley wrote, "are thrifty but ignorant, and usually wretchedly poor; they come from countries where popular education and popular government have as yet made little headway; they are often lacking in initiative and self-reliance; and they lack the Anglo-Teutonic conception of government by popular will." When such foreigners enter agri-business as tenants and field workers, in many communities "there is no longer enough of the older residential class" of "strong, opinionated, virile" native citizens remaining to run things. "Jose Cardoza, Frencesco Bertolini, and Petar Petarovich are elected as school directors," Cubberley lamented. "The process is of course educative to these newcomers, though a little hard on local government."[34] In Nebraska, a survey showed that over half of the rural teachers were of foreign extraction, a serious problem to educators from the University of Nebraska. "How can we have national spirit," they asked, "in a Commonwealth where there is an infusion of the language and blood of many nations unless there is a very strong effort made to socialize the different elements and weld them into a unified whole .... It therefore becomes evident how important it is that the teacher be an American in sympathy, ideals, training, and loyalty."[35]

Study after study revealed the corruption of the rural Eden as the 20th century progressed: the old social life disintegrating, talented youth fleeing boredom and mud, schoolhouses falling apart, outhouses reeking, absentee landlords squeezing profit. A Presbyterian survey of 1,764 square miles of Illinois reported that 53 per cent of the farms were run by tenants, churches were stagnating, and people resorting to poolrooms, saloons and barber shops for recreation.[36] An Oregon teacher complained in 1915 that "at the present time there is little if any, social activity in the rural communities. The days of the husking bees, quilting parties, barn raisings, spelling matches, and literaries, are past. The farmer knows very little of the people about him, and the word 'neighbor' is seldom heard."[37] Crusaders agreed that something must be done to regenerate the countryside now that new social forces had disrupted the community of yeomen. The basic goal, said Cubberley, was "to retain on the farm, as farmers, a class which represents the best type of American manhood," a "standard" which he defined as middle class, public spirited and owning broad green acres.[38]

6. Power to the Professional

After providing a clear analysis of the economic and demographic forces which had disrupted the yeoman ideal, the reformers turned for solution to the school omnipotent -- a simplistic answer to complex problems, but one which had the advantage of increasing the reformers' own power while blaming the victims. "That the schools, managed as they have been mainly by country people," said Cubberley, "are largely responsible for the condition in which country communities find themselves today, there can be little question."[39] If the country people had botched it, then the only recourse was for the professionals to take over.

Starting with the NEA Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools in the 1890s, the articulate professionals mostly agreed on the remedies: consolidation of schools and transportation of pupils, expert supervision by county superintendents, "taking the schools out of politics," professionally-trained teachers, and connecting the curriculum "with the everyday life of the community."[40]

Equality of opportunity for rural youth meant regulation. No detail was unimportant. The Oregon standards for rural schools decreed that an illustration hanging on the wall of a rural school "must be a copy of a picture listed in the State Course of Study, and should contain at least 100 square inches in the body of the picture, or 180 square inches including the frame." Of course graffiti in the privies (that bane of country teachers and subject of so many anguished paragraphs) were strictly forbidden. The duties of the teacher were precise and mundane: "Must maintain good order at all times; supervise play-ground; have her work well prepared; follow State Course of Study; take at least one educational journal; have daily program, approved by country Superintendent, posted in room within first month of school; keep register in good condition; be neat in attire."[41] An angry teacher wrote to a Portland newspaper that the bureaucrats were taking over public education:

> By degrees there is being built in our state a machine among the 'aristocratic' element of our profession that ... will make [teachers] serfs, to be moved about at will of a state superintendent of public instruction through his lieutenants, county superintendents.
>
> The first ... link in the chain is already made. The compulsory reading circle law whereby a county superintendent can at his will annul and the state superintendent can take away your certificate ... unless you read some book designated by certain individuals each year. What a reflection upon the common teacher! We have

> no choice but to dig up our money, and slowly but surely the public will feel the evil effects on their children of a class of teachers who like to be 'serfs' instead of independent Americans.[42]

"The paradox of American education," said another Oregon schoolman in 1926, "is that it asks for education for all, yet urges that control of the educational system be placed in a bureaucracy," as if educated citizens can't be trusted to control their own schools.[43]

Nowhere is this "paradox" more apparent than in the plans to reform the rural school. But on closer examination rural-school reform becomes not so much a paradox as a transfer of power from the tribe to the professionals. The rural-school reformers talked about democracy and rural needs, but they believed that they had the answers and should run the schools. What they needed was authority: "It is the lack of captains and colonels of larger grasp and insight that is today the greatest single weakness of our rural and village educational army. When matched against the city educational army, with its many captains and colonels, and under generals of large insight and effective personal force, the city army easily outgenerals its opponent."[44] "Absolute faith in the idea and efficacy of consolidation is preemeninently the message of this little volume," wrote one of these "colonels," J.B. Arp, in the preface to his school efficiency monograph. District politics, elected superintendents must go, said Arp. "Men and women of ability and vision will soon lift a county school system out of its ruts, but to do so they must first be lifted out of the mire of petty partisan politics themselves and placed upon a high level of professional standing."[45] "Most questions of educational policy procedure and finance ..." another school leader declared, "better settled if removed entirely from the control of ... district officers, and given either to county or state educational authorities for determination ...."[46]

This movement to take control of the rural common school away from the local community and to turn it over to the professionals was part of a more general organizational revolution in American education in which laymen lost much of their control over the schools. In the cities schoolmen pioneered new bureaucratic patterns of educational designed to parallel and complement the occupational specialization and professionalization of other sectors of an urban-technological society. They claimed to "free education from politics" by state laws coercing rural communities to consolidate schools. Thereby they achieved more autonomy for professionals to run the educational systems as they thought best. From 1910 to 1960 the number of one-room schools declined from approximately 200,000 to 20,000. In trying to modernize rural schooling they believed that children as well as teachers would benefit, and indeed the students did gain better school buildings, a broader and more contemporary course of studies and better qualified teachers and administrators. The new educational standards reflected an increasingly cosmopolitan rather than local scale of values among schoolmen, who sought to blur the differences between district and district, county and county, and even state and state. This in turn gave country youth greater occupational mobility and introduced them to different life-styles.

But patrons continued to resist consolidation and standardization in a battle which made little sense to educators who had preconceived ideas about schooling. Country people may have been dissatisfied with their school buildings and with an archaic curriculum, but they wanted to control their own schools. In a major study of rural schools in New York State in 1921, for example, 65 per cent of rural patrons polled wanted to elect their county superintendent; 69 per cent opposed consolidation of schools.[47] Subsequent studies showed that rural people in Ohio, Wisconsin and Idaho also opposed unification. The impetus to consolidate rural schools almost always came from outside the rural community. It was rare to find a local group that "had sponsored or spearheaded the drive for reorganization."[48]

During the 20th century the consolidation of rural high schools became a major source of controversy. In his study of "Plainville," a middlewestern farming community, James West wrote that the small-town high school, like its predecessor the one-room school, became "a new focus of community life and ritual." There residents came to social and athletic events, listened to debates and orations in which the contestants recited speeches which they had bought ready-made for the occasion, and attended graduation ceremonies which became rites of passage into a wider world. As "symbols of community 'modernity,'" the town high schools gave local people the feeling that they had access to a mass society while they were still near enough to enlist local loyalties and small enough to serve as integrative agencies for the patrons. Thus they became institutions valued in themselves, quite apart from the goal of teaching students certain skills and knowledge.[49]

When state educational authorities claimed that unification of districts would produce larger, and hence more educationally effective, high schools, their professional arguments fell largely on hostile ears. In California, for example, state legislative committees had since 1920 attacked small high schools as "inefficient, short-sighted, and unprogressive," but many local districts held out against the Bureau of School District Organization. A case in point was the bitter battle in 1954 over the reorganization of Bret Harte High School (which served as a focus for the towns of Copperopolis, Angels Camp, Murphys and Avery). Opponents of centralization feared a loss of social identity amid "the creeping menace of unification": "We must fight this thing which is destroying our local autonomy with all our power ... we of Avery, Murphys, and Copperopolis who are about to disappear behind the iron curtain cry out: 'Carry out the fight.'" Some citizens argued that unification would produce more economical and efficient schools, but they were denounced as "newcomers" and "renegades."[50] Across the country in Maine, E. B. White lamented the loss of a local high school:

> The State Board of Education withholds its blessing from high schools that enroll fewer than three hundred students. Under mounting pressure from the state, the town organized a school administration district, usually referred to as SAD. Sad is the word for it .... The closing of our high school caused an acute pain in the hearts of most of the townsfolk, to whom the building was a symbol of their own cultural life and a place where one's loyalty was real, lasting, and sustaining.[51]

These debates over the control of schooling echoed earlier developments in cities and their suburbs. In 1960, a leading liberal educator, Myron Lieberman, could indict local control as the chief reason for "the dull parochialism and attenuated totalitarianism" of American education, but today many reformers call for more, not less, "community control" of schools. Until recently, many leaders trusted in expertise and centralization of power as the paths to reform. Now, however, there is a crisis of confidence in such remedies.[52]

As Robert Alford has observed, "systematic analysis of the relation of small communities to the state and the larger society has been hindered by the refusal of some scholars to recognize the conflicts of values involved, or by their tendency to dissolve the conflicts in liberal rhetoric." Thus some commentators have talked of a failure of communication, or defined "'true' local control as the control exercised by a 'strong' district," or blurred the "division between professional values and community values."[53] Nor has obfuscation been limited to those who wished to enforce state standards on unwilling communities. As Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman indicate in Small Town in a Mass Society, rural and small-town dwellers often developed elaborate self-delusions to mask the interconnection of their lives with the institutions of a mass society "that regulate and determine" their existence. "The public enactment of community life and public statements of community values seemed to bear little relationship to the community's operating institutions and the private lives of its members."[54]

If one faces the contest of values and power directly, it is apparent that professional autonomy and community control do often collide, that even the most remote rural community normally does intersect with a complex urban world, that giving students sufficient training to participate in modern society does often diminish diversity of life-styles in the nation even as it opens opportunities to young people. "Imposition" invariably occurs in schools, whether it takes the form of the affirmation of local norms of belief and behavior or the substitution of alternate standards from outside the community. In response to a common feeling of powerlessness amid vast bureaucracies, nostalgic old-timers and sophisticated radicals alike now call for decentralized control or participatory democracy, forgetful of the possible tyranny of the tribe, while others carry on the quest for modernization, rarely recognizing how fragile, finally, is a sense of voluntary community in a mass society.

PART II

THE ONE BEST SYSTEM AND THE POLITICS OF PLURALISM: NINETEENTH CENTURY

1. Introduction

Most American urban educational systems of the nineteenth century began as loosely-structured village schools. This legacy of village patterns of control and behavior continued to frustrate those who wished to standardize the schools and to adapt them to the demographic, economic, and organizational transformations taking place in the cities. After surveying urban schools in the 1880's, a leading educator, John Philbrick, concluded that "no doubt excessive decentralization of administration has been one of the chief obstacles to improvement in every department of our free school system." As cities grew by adding new wards, central and ward school committees became bloated until they often numbered in scores and even hundreds. Some districts of cities sought to retain control of their local schools much as did rural communities fighting consolidation. Lay school committee members in cities or in villages considered it their duty to hire teachers, to visit schools, to examine children and supervise teachers, to select textbooks, and to decide on momentous matters like the purchase of stoves and doorknobs. Philbrick found, for example, that the fifty members of the Cincinnati board of education divided itself up into seventy-four subcommittees: thirty-four supervised individual schools, while the rest dealt with topics ranging from penmanship to reports and excuses. Although Hartford, Connecticut had a population of 42,015 in 1880, each of its schools had its own trustees who raised tax money and completely controlled education in the neighborhood schoolhouse.[1]

We shall begin, then, by looking at schooling in the swollen villages that became cities in the nineteenth century. In older centers like New York and Boston, educational reformers early recognized that traditional politics and processes of schooling were breaking down amid the stresses of ethnic and religious conflict, overcrowding, poverty, industrialization and the disruption of familiar patterns of control and communication that attended the explosive growth of urban populations.[2] Newer settlements like Chicago and Portland recognized that they had some of the same problems and borrowed from the experience of reformers in the east.

Leading educators were convinced that there was one best system of education for urban populations and that it was their task to discover and implement it. They were impressed with the order and efficiency of the new technology and forms of organization they saw about them. The division of labor in the factory, the punctuality and coordination of the railroad, the chain of command in business organizations -- these aroused a sense of wonder and excitement in men and women seeking to systematize the schools. They sought to replace informal and erratic means of control and information with carefully defined hierarchies, based on careful allocations of power and specified duties; to establish networks of communication, of directives, reports and statistics; to substitute impersonal rules for individual, face-to-face adjudication of disputes; and to set objective qualifications for admission to various roles, whether "superintendent" or "third-grader," rather than relying on personal influence. Efficiency, continuity, precision, impartiality became their watchwords. In short, they tried to create bureaucracies. We shall examine some of the features of the systems they created for the masses of children who flocked to city classrooms.[3]

The new forms of school organization, however, came under sharp attack. Some critics derided standardization of schools as rigid and mechanical and claimed that educators were simply creating an elaborate establishment to serve their own interests. Under the kind of politics of education which often prevailed, the goals of a clear-cut hierarchy, continuity, precision, and impartiality eluded the reformers. In many cities, laymen refused to delegate decision-making to the professionals. Central school boards often remained large and unwieldy; they transacted administrative business in subcommittees; sometimes regarded the schools as a source of graft and patronage; and many of the most crucial decisions were made in decentralized ward boards. What Philbrick and his fellow superintendents wanted was more autonomy to build the best system. What they often encountered was frustration: sabotage by their own subordinates, lack of authority to select teachers or even buy textbooks, and a barrage of influences they considered extraneous to education -- like party loyalty, ethnic and religious values, and commercial rivalry. Their experience revealed how vulnerable some of the early public bureaucracies could be to "political" influence both outside and within the organization.[4]

Throughout the nineteenth century educational reformers -- both lay and professional -- wrote and spoke about the broader strategy of schooling in an urban society. While they struggled with the daily tasks of housing and teaching unprecedented numbers of children, while symbolic and practical political contests raged over public education, schoolmen and their allies sought to understand and justify a new structure and expanded role for public education as villages became cities.[5] Not until a period of reform from the top down at the turn of the century would the full implications of this strategy become clear.

2. The Swollen Village

Urbanization proceeded at a faster rate between 1820 and 1860 than in any other period of American history. While the total population grew about one-third per decade, the number of people in places of 2,500 or more increased three times as fast. A muddy small town in 1830, Chicago became a metropolis of over 109,000 by 1860. In a single year, 1847, Boston added more than 37,000 Irish immigrants to its population of 114,000. The following statistics demonstrate the frenetic pace of city-building:

	1820	1860
Places of 5,000 to 10,000	22	136
Places of 10,000 to 25,000	8	58
Places of 25,000 to 50,000	2	19
Places of 50,000 to 100,000	1	7
Places over 100,000	1	9

During the same time the number of people living in urban settlements increased from 693,255 to 6,216,518. From 1839 to 1869, the value added to the economic output of the nation by non-household manufacturing soared from $240,000,000 to $1,630,000,000, while railroad mileage in operation jumped from 23 in 1830 to 52,922 in 1870.[6] Behind the statistics lay massive changes in styles of life, puzzled efforts to control the effects of demographic and technological change.

In a village, each household might have its own well for water, its outhouse, its leather buckets and plans to alert neighbors in case of fire, its horse and carriage for transportation, its kitchen garden. What the family could not do for itself, friends and neighbors or local merchants, craftsmen, or professionals could normally provide. The household was the main unit of production, whether of food or handicrafts. But as established villages grew into crowded urban areas, as new cities mushroomed in the West, residents found that the older self-reliance or voluntary services did not suffice.

Bayrd Still traces the changes that took place in Milwaukee, for example, during the three decades following its incorporation as a city in 1846. The old custom of volunteer services and self-help "was giving way," he wrote, "to a specialization in urban administration which developments in science and increased wealth encouraged and which the growth of population and its attendant problems made inevitable." The marshall and ward constables and night watchmen proved inadequate to quell riots or to prevent the surge of thefts, arson, and murders that struck the city in 1855; consequently, business leaders demanded a regular police force in that year. Likewise, in the 1850's, the traditional volunteer fire companies lost their appeal to recruits, while the task of fighting serious fires with Milwaukee's new steam pump became too complex for amateurs. Thus firefighting became the domain of paid professionals. Able-bodied men were once required to spend two or three days a year building or repairing streets, but this task the city council decided to delegate to a board for public works. Like crime, fire, and bumpy streets, disease threatened all those within the confines of the city: germs did not defer to rank and station. When health became increasingly a public and not an individual or family concern, the city council required vaccination against smallpox, prohibited the accumulation of garbage (as a defense against cholera), and sought to build a sewer system. Private corporations sold stock and secured franchises for public services like street lighting and horse railroads. As city residents became more interdependent, they increasingly turned to specialized and impersonal agencies to perform tasks which they and their neighbors once took care of. As the place of work became separated from the home, activities had to be coordinated in time and place, new means of transportation and communication devised, and an urban discipline developed in the city's residents. The change to bureaucratic specialization of function, however, was gradual, and beset with serious problems of group conflict and ambiguity of political authority.[7]

Ambivalent attitudes towards centralized authority shaped the history of the police power in cities like Boston and New York, just as it influenced the politics of urban education. In a study of New York police, James Richardson observed that before the nineteenth century Americans were dubious about the idea of police -- and even the word itself, fearing "any quasi-military body that might constitute a threat to civil liberties." Until 1845, New York had night watchmen and officers attached to the courts but no regular police force. The salaried policemen who began work that year were required to live in the ward where they worked. Until 1853 they were untrained and did not wear a uniform. In Boston, the police force also grew in size and importance during the late 1840's, and for some of the same reasons as in New York: conservative citizens worried about ethnic and religious riots, feared outbursts of social disorder and crime, and became despondent about traditional methods of social control. As informal mechanisms of shaping behavior broke down, cities created functionaries -- men behind badges, visible with their uniforms -- to keep disorderly elements in line. The creation of efficient and visible police paralleled the movement to standardize schooling. Both were partially responses to the influx of the immigrant poor.[8]

In the 1830's a foreign visitor to Boston observed that "there are no better policemen than the ordinary run of Bostonians.... This is by some called the wholesome restraint of public opinion."

He echoed earlier comments both of natives and visitors that Boston was a compact, close-knit society in which each person knows that his behavior is an open book to others: "His virtues, his vices, his wisdom and his folly, excite here much the same attention, and are examined in much the same manner, as in a country village." When Boston swelled in size in the 1840's, its population became increasingly heterogeneous in ethnicity, in religion, and in economic class. Geographical mobility also helped to break down the cohesiveness of neighborhoods. Some conventional forms of communication broke down, persons became strangers to each other, and ties of deference, personal acquaintance, and shared religious and moral views became more and more restricted to small voluntary groups rather than representing the public philosophy of the city.[9]

To instill common values, to create a new type of urban discipline, Bostonians turned to public education. They were proud of their schools; Horace Mann boasted that Boston spent more for free education than Parliament appropriated for all England. In 1806, much in the fashion of village elders monitoring local schools, select men, state senators, clergymen, overseers of the poor and other notables joined the school committee in its annual visits to the schools. That year there were but 1500 children in all the schools of the community, public and private. By 1845 the schools had reached an entirely different scale, with annual expenditures of about $212,000 and an enrollment of 17,306 pupils, yet the city still expected committees of laymen to administer public education.[10]

Despite attempts to organize the classrooms into a more unified system, public education in Boston in the mid-1840's remained more a miscellaneous collection of village schools than a coherent bureaucracy. Responsibility was diffused, teachers had considerable autonomy in their decentralized domains, and the flow of information was erratic and insufficiently focused for purposes of polity. The primary schools, founded in 1818 to prepare children to enter the grammar schools, were mostly one-room, one-teacher schools scattered across the city. While technically the Boston school committee appointed the members of the primary school board, in fact the trustees of the primary schools were largely an independent, self-nominating and self-perpetuating body; by the 1850's their number reached 190, and they supervised that many separate schools. Friends of the arrangement argued that enlisting the help of so many laymen kept the schools close to the people of the neighborhood and fostered interest in education. The twenty-four man main school committee that supervised the grammar and writing schools and the high school were largely members of the Boston elite -- businessmen, professionals, ministers, leaders of the wealth and opinion of the city -- and were elected yearly by wards. Each year subcommittees of the board visited each school (excluding the primary schools) and gave a thumbnail sketch of its virtues and defects after conducting an oral examination of the pupils and monitoring its discipline and mode of instruction. In 1845, for example, a four-man subcommittee simply reported that The Latin School was "in its usual good condition," although the subcommittees on the segregated black school saw fit to report on some of the problems that would subsequently lead members of the Boston Negro community to boycott the school.[11]

Not only were the different levels of schools -- primary, grammar (or intermediate), and high schools disjointed, but the structure of individual schools was confusing. In almost all of the grammar schools there were actually two independent divisions, one on each floor: a "writing school" whose master taught penmanship and arithmetic; and a "grammar school" which focused on spelling, reading, grammar, geography, and history. Separate subcommittees of the board examined each "school" within a school, and the masters of each were quite independent of each other, although reformers had complained of the "two-headed" system for a long time. Depending on its size, the writing and grammar schools had not only a master but also an usher and assistant teachers who concentrated on instructing the younger children. The grading of children by age and achievement was crude at best and haphazard in the coordination of program and approach between the reading and writing schools. (Even within the schools often the master was not carefully supervising the usher and assistants). Two hundred to three hundred children comprised a typical classroom: small groups could retire to anterooms of the central classroom in order to recite their lessons to assistants. Not surprisingly, in view of such large classes and dry teaching methods then in use, many teachers found it difficult to maintain discipline and resorted frequently to corporal punishment.[12]

Ambiguity of authority and diffusion of control was partially the result of a system of governance that had grown by accretion from village origins and still appealed to some Bostonians. Centralization was a dirty word to many, especially to Democrats, who associated it with King George, Prussian autocracy, and monopolies. Even though his formal powers were slight as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, Mann faced bitter attack from foes who portrayed him as a bureaucratic boss who would endanger local autonomy and impose his political and religious views as official doctrine. Many laymen who took pride in their work as board members and had no desire to give up their power and influence. And school masters owed their jobs and often a substantial degree of autonomy to the decentralized system; if a subcommittee objected to some defect one year, the next there would be a new group to satisfy; and in the meantime no bureaucrats came around to pester. Rank-and-file Bostonians seemed complacent about the status-quo in their schools. The experienced school reformer, William Fowle, snorted that "the greatest offense that any citizen can commit is to doubt the perfection of our schools, and any attempt to improve them on the part of a committee man, is madness, and is instantly visited by official death."[13]

But those who wanted to change the schools found the lack of reliable information about the schools and the absence of leverage for reform infuriating. Horace Mann, for example, believed that the methods of discipline and teaching employed by the Boston masters were anachronistic at best and sadistic at worst. In Prussian centralized schools he found examples of organization -- supervision, graded classes, well-articulated curriculum -- and humane methods of instruction which he thought Boston should emulate. As early as 1837 he called for a superintendent to improve the schools. But all he succeeded in doing was to provoke a massive rhetorical battle with the masters, one that resembled the conflicts of old Chinese warlords who would assemble their armies to an imaginary line, hurl curses at each other, and leave with bodies intact though tempers superheated. Mann's friend and fellow-reformer, Samuel Gridley Howe, decided to take up the battle where Mann left off, but this time with a new weapon: information.[14]

Because of the diffusion of authority among the large primary board and the school board and because of the haphazard evaluation of schools by the subcommittees, no one really knew what was going on in the schools as a whole nor was there any way to use such information to determine authoritative policy. When Howe was elected to the school board in 1844, he decided to revolutionize the collection of data on the performance of children in the grammar schools. Clearly his interest was not in the information by itself but in the use of that data as an argument for what he called "radical reform." Accordingly he and his colleagues on the subcommittee devised uniform written tests which they gave to the top class in each of the grammar schools -- a single standard by which to judge and compare the output of each school, "positive information, in black and white," to replace the intuitive and often superficial written evaluations of oral examinations.

Using required textbooks as a source of questions, they printed a test which they administered in such a way as to ensure its secrecy. In Howe's eyes the results were scandalous. Out of 57,873 possible answers, students answered only 17,216 correctly and accumulated 35,947 errors in punctuation in the process. Bloopers abounded: one child said that rivers in North Carolina and Tennessee run in opposite directions because of "the will of God." Although the test included abstruse and tricky items, Howe argued that it was fair and showed that children in the Dudley School in Roxbury did much better on the examination than the children in Boston. Students learned facts by rote but not principles, he said: they could give the date of the embargo but not explain what it did.[15]

Howe used the test results as evidence for his charge that the Boston school system "is wrong in the principle of its organization, inefficient in its operation, and productive of little good, in comparison with its expense." To cure these faults required basic structural changes: employment of a full-time School Commissioner (who later would be called superintendent); and abolition of the "two-headed" system in the intermediate schools, placing them in charge of one master. The school board could adequately "represent all the wants and interests which should be provided for, and all the opinions and feelings which should be consulted." But it was "necessarily, an uncertain, fluctuating and inexperienced body," and by its very organization it ensured that "no one man, and no subcommittee is ever required or expected to know the actual condition of all the Grammar Schools in Boston." What the city needed was a professional leader who could offer "permanence, personal responsibility, continued and systematic labor," and who could bridge the information and policy gap between board and individual schools and between the board and the city government. Howe recognized that "many interests will be assailed" by such an office, for under the present system "we have a Board of twenty-four men, not paid for any labor, who share a responsibility, which, thus broken into fragments, presses on no one ...." An efficient administration would endanger vested interests -- those of the masters above all, who enjoyed the immunity afforded by a decentralized power base.

Howe recognized that the related reform of abolishing the double-headed system of writing schools and grammar schools in the same building -- the "thirty-two independent rulers" -- would threaten "comfortable places and salaries for persons otherwise, perhaps, out of employment." This would be a bold step, sure to arouse "thirty-two incumbents and their connections to the third and fourth generation, and their circles of friends." Yet there was no pedagogical reason for such a split in authority -- a plan contrary to those in other cities -- and certain justification to abolish it. One master in a school could organize his female assistants into a harmonious system: one government, unity rather than diversity, which will teach the child the most important lesson, which is "to understand and acquiesce in the rule under which he lives."[17]

Although Howe's outspoken criticism and use of empirical muckraking offended many people, his more moderate successors as Boston reformers put many of his ideas into practice. Their fundamental insight was that Boston had outgrown the day of amateur village governance in education. The city would become one of the leaders in designing and spreading the one best system.

Philadelphia offered a more extreme example of decentralization and diffusion of authority than Boston. In 1860, the Philadelphia district, a union of the old city with the surrounding county settlements, contained 63,530 students and annually spent over half a million dollars on its ninety-two schools. Real power to make decisions lay with the twenty-four sectional boards which built and repaired schools, hired teachers, and adjusted instruction to the desires of the people. Representatives from each of these ward boards supposedly coordinated civic education through a central board of controllers, but keen rivalry between them often resulted in unequal allocation of funds. Directors felt loyal to their own neighborhoods of Frankford or Passyunk or Kensington or Mantua. Depending on the persuasiveness or influence of the local director, one school might have a full coal bin while another lacked fuel, one might have jammed classrooms while another had empty seats. Members of the central board complained repeatedly that they did not have sufficient information on which to act in disbursing funds or correcting abuses. Edward Steel, a leading businessman and President of the controllers, lamented the inefficiency of the decentralized network of power, but so firmly embedded was it in the political culture of the city that it was not until 1882 that Philadelphia had a superintendent of schools, and not until the twentieth century that the local wards lost their substantial powers. In Pittsburg, likewise, the old pattern of ward control of schools, stemming from the time when the city was a loose association of neighborhoods, continued past 1900.[18]

A number of new cities passed rapidly through the village stage of organization of schools and early adopted bureaucratic forms of governance pioneered in the East. Chicago was a case in point. In 1854 its first school superintendent, the former master of the Boylston School in Boston, found a lusty city of mud streets and sidewalks plastered over with planks, a large trade with the agricultural hinterlands spurred by the six railroads that served the metropolis, and a set of ambitious plans for development that included dredging the Chicago river and using the dirt to raise the streets twelve feet. But the schools were chaotic, differing "from isolated, primitive, rural schools only in the huge numbers of children each teacher struggled with." Each school had three trustees to select the teacher and keep an eye on the classroom, while the city council appointed seven "inspectors" who tried -- largely unsuccessfully -- to integrate these schools into a city system. In 1850, twenty-one teachers confronted 1919 children in their classrooms, almost 100 on the average; the same year there were about 13,500 children of school age in town.[19]

City promoters sketched plans of overnight metropolises, complete with universities and opera houses, but when actual cities grew as fast as did Chicago, the city fathers had trouble believing their eyes or planning for the actual services citizens would need. The public schools of the 1840's met in the abandoned barracks of Fort Dearborn, in churches, and in rented stores and houses. In

1845 the inspectors persuaded the city council to build a new school, called "Miltimore's Folly" after its chief advocate, much to the consternation of the mayor who argued that the building would never be filled and might instead "be converted into a factory or an insane asylum for those responsible for its erection." The mayor was wrong: 543 children turned up when it opened, and 843 the next year. Three teachers in that school were expected to instruct all those children in ungraded classrooms with no uniform books, and normally no professional training. Like teachers in the other schools, they struggled to maintain order in the vast classes, listened to children recite, and taught the fine art of quill sharpening; as for the records, it was hard enough simply to count the scholars as required to receive state aid without bothering to list their names on the register.[20]

So the first superintendent, John Dore, had a big task ahead of him. For two years he struggled to examine each child and to assign him or her to a particular level in a particular school, to keep records of attendance, to require uniform textbooks, to hire school janitors, and to persuade parents to abandon their "migratory character" and to send their children to school regularly. Dore's successor, William Wells, carried on the battle to transform the haphazard village schools into a graded, standardized city system, but despite Wells' professional skill in inspiring the teachers, in creating a coherent curriculum, and in awakening public interest in education, year after year thousands of children could not attend school for lack of seats. In 1860, 123 teachers faced a staggering total of 14,000 scholars in their classrooms.[21]

Indeed, the pressure of numbers was a main reason for the bureaucratization that gradually replaced the older decentralized village pattern of schooling. "Organization becomes necessary in the crowded schools in congested districts," said Albert Marble, superintendent of schools in Worcester, Massachusetts, "just as hard pavements cover the city street, though the soft turf and the country road are easier for the steed and for the traveller ...." Like Marble, who argued that an "ideal education would be a small class of children in charge of a thoroughly cultivated man or woman through a series of years," a number of educators glorified the old lifestyle and broader education of farm or village. "There is no better place to bring up a boy than on a farm," wrote a leading urban educator, William Mowry, in his autobiography, "especially if that farm is located in the midst of an intelligent community with a good rural school." But as the villages grew into congested, heterogeneous cities, as conflicting values and strangers on the streets threatened the old pattern of Protestant socialization, decentralized decision-making and pedagogical variety struck many educational leaders as anarchy. They sought instead to centralize the nerve-centers of information and influence and to standardize the educational process. They tried to design, in short, the one best system.[22]

3. The One Best System

In 1885, John D. Philbrick, former superintendent of schools in Boston, wrote a comprehensive survey of City School Systems in the United States. His purpose was to hasten that "uniformity of excellence" in urban education which he foresaw as the product of a new expertise and an intensified emulation among American school managers. Now, he believed, the chief task of the educational statesman was not evangelical persuasion but the "perfecting of the system itself. With this end in view, he always has some project in hand: the establishment of a training school for teachers, an evening school, or an industrial school; the adoption of a better method of examining and certificating teachers ... an improvement in the plan of constructing school-houses; the devising of a more rational program and a more rational system of school examinations." He did not doubt that there was "one best way" of educating urban children everywhere. The French might invent the best primary school, the Germans the best arrangement of a schoolroom, the Prussians the best way of training teachers. "If America devises the best school desk, it must go to the ends of a civilized world .... The really good local thing, the outgrowth of educational laws, that stands the test of experiment, in time becomes general." The New York Commissioner of Education, Andrew S. Draper, told teachers in 1889 that "it is obligatory upon everyone engaged in this work to have full knowledge of all that is being done the wide-world over to diffuse public education, and it is their duty to seize hold of those methods and to put them to use here." Philbrick had only scorn for those "amateur educational reformers" who argued that the machinery of education "is already too perfect," that administrators were putting organization before education. "Modern civilization is rapidly tending to uniformity and unity .... The best is the best everywhere." To Philbrick and his fellow schoolmen, the perfecting or urban education was the key to the prosperity and survival of the republic. "The future of our cities will be largely what education makes it and the future of our country will be largely what the cities make it. What but education is to settle the question how far self government is to be practicable in our populous cities?"[23]

In attempting to systematize urban schools, the superintendents of the latter half of the nineteenth century sought to transform structures and decision-making processes in education. From classroom to central office they tried to impose new controls over pupils, teachers, principals, and other subordinate members of the school hierarchy. Although they often used the non-political language of social engineers, they were actually trying to replace village forms in which laymen participated in decentralized decision-making with a new bureaucratic model of a closed "non-political" system in which directives flowed from the top down, reports emanated from the bottom, and each step of the educational process was carefully prescribed by professional educators. The purpose of schooling, wrote Philbrick, "is the imposition of tasks; if the pupil likes it, well; if not, the obligation is the same." What was true of the pupils was also true of all the other members of the system, for each person was to be accountable for specific duties as prescribed in detailed rules and regulations. As we shall see, quite often the leading schoolmen were unsuccessful in their quest since the full implementation of the one best system would require changes in the nature of the lay school boards which linked the system with the larger community. But they moved ahead where they could.[24]

The goal of a uniform system of education had long been a dream of American educators. In the 1780's Benjamin Rush argued that the new republic required "one general and uniform system of education" which would "render the mass of the people more homogeneous, and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government." He thought it necessary to "convert men into republican machines" in order for "them to perform their parts properly, in the great machine of the government of the state."

Many Americans were also impressed with Joseph Lancaster's plan to educate poor children by the use of student monitors and a carefully prescribed program of studies, for the Lancasterian system seemed to be a perfectly designed and well-oiled machine. The New York Public School Society adopted a modified version of the Lancasterian plan for its schools for poor children, and as the population of the city expanded, it simply built additional identical schools. Their structure of education not only offered identical small steps of learning for the pupils, but also created a hierarchy of offices which offered a ladder of promotion to the industrious: student, monitor, monitor-general, assistant teacher, teacher, principal, and finally assistant superintendent, and superintendent. Lancaster insisted that authority inhered in the office not the person. Thus, an older or larger student would be expected to obey a precocious monitor just as a private obeys a sergeant.[25]

Although they never admired the Lancasterian system, educational leaders in Boston were also fascinated with the thought of applying the factory model to the sytematization of schools. Like the manager of a cotton mill, the superintendent of schools could supervise employees, keep the enterprise technically up to date, and monitor the uniformity and quality of the product. The first superintendent of schools in Boston, Nathan Bishop, claimed that "in organizing a system of popular education, the same practical judgment is to be exercised in making special adaptations of means to ends, as in any manufacturing or business enterprise." Using yet another metaphor, a later schoolman would refer to the city superintendent as a conductor on the educational railroad.[26]

In suggesting such analogies to machines and factories, educational publicists were not simply using fashionable jargon to appeal to the prejudices of leading citizens. Like educators who would later use the corporate board of directors as a model for the governance of school systems, many of these early bureaucrats were fascinated with the factory as a model for efficient urban education. Just as eighteenth century theologians could think of God as a clockmaker, so the social engineers searching for new organizational forms did not generally invest the words "machine" or "factory" with the negative associations they evoke today. Furthermore, schoolmen were seeking stable, predictable, reliable structures in which their own role as educational managers would be visible, secure, and prestigious. They believed bureaucracy would provide what Philbrick called "a suitable hierarchical situation for the teacher." Philbrick quoted admiringly a European educator who advocated the bureaucratic ideal of scientific impartiality: "It is the function of a good administration ... to ascertain merit and to class individuals according to their aptitudes; then there would be an end of solicitations, of subserviency, of intrigues, of protections, of favors, of injustices."[27]

To those who feared the whims of a decentralized politics of education, such a meritocracy had a strong appeal. While it is possible to see in retrospect that school bureaucracies reinforced racial, religious, and class privilege in many cases, many of its advocates believed that a strong and rational system of education could eliminate corporal punishment, offer new opportunities for women, equalize educational expenditures between rich and poor sections of a city, and provide a system of instruction which was impartially efficient for all classes of the population. As Carl Kaestle observes, they worried less than we do today about the depersonalization and alienation which mass education often entails. Indeed, they saw punctuality, order, regularity, and industry as essential features of a uniform urban discipline which public schools must impose on an otherwise wayward population.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, there were many channels of communication among the leading urban schoolmen. They met face-to-face in organizations like the round-table of superintendents in the Ohio valley or in the Department of Superintendence which was the center of leadership in the National Education Association. In 1880 prominent schoolmen formed a prestigious innersanctum within the NEA which was called the National Council of Education. This body sought to prescribe what was wise and unwise in educational policy for the rest of the nation. They read each others' city school reports and subscribed to prestigious educational periodicals, most of which were edited in the northeast but which had nationwide distribution.[28]

New patterns of organization spread rapidly as a result of these informal and formal networks of communication, western cities could skip earlier stages of school reform and profit from experience elsewhere. Richard Wade has observed that the new cities arising by the banks of the Ohio and the Mississippi -- St. Louis, Cincinnati, and the rest -- copied the educational systems of "the great cities across the mountains" even though they were "freed from ... old restraints and traditions." Louisville sent a new principal to study eastern schools to eliminate the need for "expensive errors and fruitless experiments." Denver's cautious superintendent, Aaron Gove, adopted only those changes which had been tested by years of success elsewhere. World Fairs and International Expositions acquainted Americans with new educational innovations developed elsewhere.

Although in theory the whole world was an educational laboratory, a large percentage of American superintendents and educational reformers were Yankees who assumed that the New England way was best. George Atkinson, the principal founder of public education in Oregon, preferred salt codfish to salmon and planted the first elm tree in the state of Oregon after he had shipped it around Cape Horn by clipper ship. In similar fashion, when he became superintendent of schools in Oregon City and Portland, Oregon, he introduced the "Boston Plan" of classifying grades of schools, bringing to the fir forests of the Northwest the latest innovations of the urbanized East.[29]

William T. Harris, superintendent of schools in St. Louis and later U.S. Commissioner of Education, was probably the outstanding intellectual leader in American education in the years between the death of Horace Mann in 1859 and the emergence of John Dewey as a spokesman for the new education in the early years of the twentieth century. In 1871, while Harris was still superintendent of schools in St. Louis, he stated succinctly the premises behind the drive to standardize the schools: "The first requisite of the school is Order: each pupil must be taught first and foremost to conform his behavior to a general standard." Harris pointed out that, in modern industrial society "conformity to the time of the train, to the starting of work in the manufactory" and to other characteristic activities of the city, requires absolute precision and regularity. The corollary was that the school be a model of bureaucratic punctuality and precision: "The pupil must have his lessons ready at the appointed time, must rise at the tap of the bell, move to the line, return; in short, go through all the evolutions with equal precision."[30]

In order to provide this type of urban discipline for the child in the classroom, urban schoolmen needed to transform village schools into unified city systems. They wanted to divide the cities up into attendance districts, subdivide ungraded primary and grammar schools into distinct classes in which children were segregated according to their academic progress, provide adequate school houses and equipment, train and certify teachers for specific tasks within these graded schools, design a sequential curriculum or program of studies, devise examinations which would test the achievement of pupils and serve as a basis for promotion (and often as a basis of evaluating the teacher as well), and provide specialized services such as those given in kindergartens, trade schools, evening schools, and institutions for deviant children who did not fit into the regular classroom. At the top of the system, of course, was the superintendent of schools who, in theory at least, was expected to be the architect and overseer of the entire system, the center of communications and directives for the schools as a whole.

By the 1880's John Philbrick found that "in most cities the territory is divided into districts corresponding to the organization of the schools; that is, each school or group of schools under the same principal has its own district, pupils being required to attend the school within the district where they reside." There were some exceptions to this pattern of neighborhood schools. In New York, for example, Philbrick found that pupils were free to attend the schools of their choice, even though each ward had its own committee responsible for the schools within its boundaries. One result was that "the absence of district limits enables certain principals, with the concurrence of the local committees, to build up schools of a peculiar character, as there is nothing to hinder them from drawing their pupils from any part of the city. Hence the schools of New York, especially the grammar schools, have come to have a more marked individuality than those of other cities. One school, for instance, gets a reputation for fitting its pupils for the high school, while others become noted for fitting their pupils for practical business." The goal of most schoolmen elsewhere was quite different, however, for they wanted to have each school in each district of the larger unified system as much alike as possible so that "there can be no competition between the schools in respect to the number or character of the pupils admitted." The mobility of pupils from district to district, the desire for efficient multiplication of schools, and the urge for standardization of schools and students made fixed attendance districts a uniform course of study, common textbooks, and precisely calibrated methods into the pathway of progress in educational administration.[31]

Crucial to educational bureaucracy was the objective and efficient classification or "grading" of pupils. In 1838, Henry Barnard first gave a lecture on "Gradation of Public Schools, with Special Reference to Cities and Large Villages" which he would repeat in more than fifty cities across the country during the next two decades. He observed that a classroom containing students of widely varying ages and attainment was not only inefficient but also inhumane: methods of discipline, teaching style, school furniture, and intellectual content should be adjusted to the maturity of pupils, and this could be done only where the children were properly classified. In the one-room school, or its inflated urban counterparts containing 200 or more pupils of varying advancement, the instructor hardly had time to teach, so varied were the tasks he faced: "From the number of class and individual recitations ... exercises are brief, hurried, and of little practical value. They consist, for the most part, of senseless repetitions of the words of a book.... Saying their lessons, as the operation is significantly described by most teachers...." High turnover of teachers compounded the evil, for each had to discover anew how far the students had progressed, and each instructor had her own favorite textbooks. If the non-graded classroom did not have such dire consequences, Barnard said, "it would be difficult to conceive of a more diverting farce than an ordinary session of a large public school, whose chaotic and discordant elements have not been reduced to system by a proper classification." Only by observing "the fundamental principle of the division of labor" could schoolmen create "such a classification of scholars as shall bring a larger number of similar age and attainments, at all times, and in every stage of their advancement, under teachers of the right qualifications, and shall enable these teachers to act upon numbers at once, for years in succession, and carry them all forward effectually together, in a regular course of instruction."[32]

From Horace Mann in Massachusetts to Calvin Stowe in Ohio to John Pierce in Michigan, leading common school crusaders urged communities to replace the heterogeneous grouping of students with a systematic plan of gradation based on the Prussian model. But it fell to a practical man, John Philbrick, actually to provide a concrete model for his urban colleagues. Philbrick knew that educational function necessarily reflected architectural form. He convinced the Boston School Board, therefore, that the proper classification of pupils required a new kind of building -- one which has since been dubbed the "egg-crate school." In 1848, the new Quincy School was dedicated and Philbrick became its principal. The building was four stories high, with a large auditorium for 700 pupils and twelve classrooms which would each accommodate 56 students. Every teacher had a separate classroom for the one grade she taught, each scholar his own desk.[33]

In 1856, as superintendent of Common Schools in Connecticut, Philbrick outlined the principles behind his plan. Let us suppose, he said, that 600 pupils lived within reasonable distance of a central point. At that central point, build a schoolhouse of twelve rooms, each designed for fifty pupils. These 600 scholars should then be "distributed in these twelve rooms, according to their advancement" but "all in the same class attend to precisely the same branches of study. Let the principal or superintendent have the general supervision and control of the whole, and let him have one male assistant or sub-principal, and ten female assistants, one for each room."[34]

And thus was stamped on mid-century America not only the graded school, but also the pedadogical harem. This sytem caught on with amazing rapidity. When the U.S. Commission of Education surveyed practices in forty-five cities in 1870, already the pattern of eight years of elementary school had become the norm (although there was considerable variety in the division of schools into primary and grammar categories). A nineteenth century student of the grading of schools, William Shearer, observed that "by 1860 the schools of most of the cities and large towns were graded. By 1870 the pendulum had swung from no system to nothing but system." The "division of labor in educational matters," wrote Shearer, "is but the result of necessary obedience to the universal law of progress. The teacher's time and talents being concentrated upon certain work, it becomes easier by repetition and, therefore, is likely to be performed more efficiently." The first superintendent of schools in Boston, Nathan Bishop, spurred the classification of pupils there, determined to organize "our System throughout on one uniform plan, thus bringing the whole into harmony with the great practical principles on which the best-managed business-enterprises are carried forward."[35]

The proper classification of pupils was only the beginning. In order to make the one best system work, the schoolmen also had to design a uniform course of study and standard examinations. Since promotion and grading depended on examinations and examinations upon the curriculum, all learning had to be carefully programmed. "A good program for one city would be, in its substance, ... a good program for every other city," Philbrick believed. "The program, the methods, the examinations, are interdependent factors in school economy. The examination should aim to conform to the program while it is, in effect, an authoritative interpretation of the program which the teacher feels bound to accept; moreover, it necessarily influences the method."[36]

The work of William Harvey Wells as superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools from 1856 to 1864 illustrates the connection between the grading of pupils and the creation of the program of study. Wells had been first a student and then a teacher at the Andover

Teachers' Seminary founded by S.R. Hall and the first school in the United States designed specifically to prepare teachers. Almost single-handedly, Wells divided over 14,000 children into ten grades and assigned 123 teachers to these primary and grammar grades. Each teacher was expected to follow a uniform schedule for teaching the subjects of spelling, arithmetic and reading. In 1862, Wells published A Graded Course of Instruction with Instructions to Teachers, which outlined not only specific items to be covered in each subject at each grade level, but also prescribed the proper teaching methods. Children began with the alphabet at the age of five, learned to count to 100 and do simple addition in the next grade, and proceeded in the next years to learn about the mysteries of Roman numerals, the hanging gardens of Babylon, the crusades, and the Trojan war. Spelling and grammar were the staples of instruction in English. Wells' book was widely adopted in cities of the Northwest as an official curriculum.[37]

In 1890, eighty-two of the largest cities reported the amount of time devoted during the eight years of elementary education to the various branches of the curriculum. The average amount of total instruction was 7,000 hours, meaning that the typical student spent four and a half hours a day for 200 days per year in study or recitation during school hours. Of that total amount of time, children averaged 516 hours in spelling; 1188 in reading; 500 in geography; 1,190 in arithmetic; 300 in grammar or "language lessons;" 150 in history; 169 to physiology (in 66 cities); 167 in "morals and manners," largely in oral lessons (in 27 cities); and 176 in natural science (in 39 cities). In addition, singing and physical education normally rounded out the course of study (physical education occupied about 2,000 hours in the average of 63 cities reporting it). The following chart indicates the placement of subjects by year and the nature of recitations as recommended by an NEA committee appointed in 1894. (See chart on page 34).

Although new subjects and methods of instruction were added to the school curriculum during the latter half of the nineteenth century -- such as vocal music, physical training, drawing, physiology, and instruction in science through "object lessons" -- the textbooks remained the central source of information and authority in the curriculum. One reason for the primacy of the textbook, as we shall see, was the inadequate education of the teacher. But another, perhaps more compelling, reason was that both pupils and teachers knew that examinations focused on the information provided in those books.[38]

The use of written examinations in all of the elementary schools in Portland, Oregon in the 1870's illustrated the hazards of testing for pupils and teachers alike. Portland's first superintendent, Samuel King, developed a uniform curriculum in 1874 and then tested the children at the end of the year to discover if they had

GENERAL PROGRAM

BRANCHES	1st year	2d year	3d year	4th year	5th year	6th year	7th year	8th year
Reading	10 lessons a week		5 lessons a week					
Writing	10 lessons a week		5 lessons a week		3 lessons a week			
Spelling lists				4 lessons a week				
English grammar	Oral, with composition lessons					5 lessons a week with text-book		
Latin, French, or German								5 lessons
Arithmetic	Oral, 60 minutes a week		5 lessons a week with text-book					
Algebra							5 lessons a week	
Geography		Oral, 60 minutes a week		5 lessons a week with text-book			3 lessons a week	
Natural Science+Hygiene	Sixty minutes a week							
United States History							5 lessons a week	
United States Constitution								5 ls
General History	Oral, sixty minutes a week							
Physical Culture	Sixty minutes a week							
Vocal Music	Sixty minutes a week divided into 4 lessons							
Drawing	Sixty minutes a week							
Manual Training or Sewing+Cookery							One-half day each week	
Number of Lessons	20+7 daily exer.	20+7 daily exer.	20+5 daily exer.	24+5 daily exer.	27+5 daily exer.	27+5 daily exer.	23+6 daily exer.	23+6 daily exer.
Total Hours of Recitations	12	12	11 2-3	13	16 1-4	16 1-4	17 1-2	17 1-2
Length of Recitations	15 min	15 min	20 min	20 min	25 min	25 min	30 min	30 min

been "thoroughly drilled in the work assigned." As a Yankee who believed that "a perfect system of school management is indispensable to the welfare of our Public Schools," King paid examinations the supreme compliment: "System, order, dispatch and promptness have characterized the examinations and exerted a helpful influence over the pupils by stimulating them to be thoroughly prepared to meet their appointments and engagements. Next to a New England climate, these examinations necessitate industry, foster promptness, and encourage pupils to do the right thing at the right time."[39]

The results of the first round of examinations might have dismayed a heart less stout than King's. In seven classrooms out of a total of twenty-one, none of the children passed. Only in six classrooms were more than half of the children promoted. But King maintained that the operation was a great success, though most of the patients died. Not surprisingly, in the next examinations teachers and pupils improved somewhat: this time between 13 percent and 75 percent of the children were promoted (in some of the classes, though, fewer than three-fourths of the students got up nerve to take the test). King published the results of the examinations in the newspaper, with the child's score and school next to his name. Parents could draw their own conclusions about the diligence of the child and the competence of the teacher, and they did. Incensed and anxious, the teachers joined irate parents to force King's resignation in 1877.[40]

The new Portland superintendent, Thomas Crawford, promptly abolished the practice of publicizing the test results. He wrote in his report of 1878 that "incalculable injury has been done, both to the teachers and to the pupils of our free schools, resulting from a spirit of rivalry on the part of the teachers." Some teachers had gone to great lengths to protect their reputations, urging children to withdraw from school shortly before the examination and even advising the superintendent to suspend slow students for trivial offenses, so that they wouldn't drag down the percentage of promotions. The system of publicity had led, Crawford said, to cramming, "bitter animosities," and "unpleasant wranglings, over arbitrary standards in marking papers." Yet Crawford was no Paul Goodman; he was a good bureaucrat who wanted harmony in the ranks. He retained the examination system, elaborating it in Mandarin detail while softening its rigors, but he kept the examination results the property of the bureaucracy. A later Portland superintendent, Frank Rigler, spent his seventeen years in the office (1896-1913) largely in perfecting the curriculum and machinery of instruction he had inherited. Lest teachers become too independent in interpreting the course of study, Rigler met with them on Saturdays and went through the textbooks page by page telling his staff what questions to ask and what answers to accept. It was common knowledge in Portland that Rigler "could sit in his office and know on what page in each book work was being done at the time in every school in the city."[41]

Cities differed in the kinds of tests which they gave to children. Some systems printed uniform city-wide written examinations, some relied on a mixture of written and oral examinations, and in certain cases, children were examined only orally, as had been the practice in rural and village schools. Normally the key figure in the examination process was the principal, although on occasion the superintendent or board members performed the task; the examination or recommendation for promotion of pupils was rarely entrusted to the individual teacher. Uniform tests were sometimes used throughout a state; in Illinois, for example, a professor of pedagogy, Charles DeGarmo, wrote tests which were sent to the schools by the state superintendent. A number of schoolmen criticized such standardized tests. Emerson E. White, a noted school superintendent and leader in the National Education Association, complained that the use of test scores "should not be used to compare schools and teachers. A careful observation of this practice for years has convinced me that such comparisons are usually unjust and mischievous." Forty years after the event, Philbrick still remembered that Samuel G. Howe had used standardized tests in Boston as a club to beat the teachers. But almost all school leaders agreed with Philbrick that it was essential to find out if students had managed to "acquire a certain amount of positive knowledge." To the extent that the classroom was part of a production line of the school factory, examinations were the means of judging the value added to the raw material, namely the knowledge that the children had acquired during the course of the year.[42]

But the acquisition of knowledge was only part of the purpose of the common school in the city. A number of scholars have recently written about the "hidden curriculum" of the public school, namely the traits of behavior and roles expected of students which are rarely written in curriculum guides or acknowledged in the manifest objectives of the school, but which are nonetheless systematically inculcated and rewarded. These include, for example, competition for extrinsic rewards such as marks, conformity to authority (such as requesting hall passes to go to the toilet), and adaptation to bureaucratic definitions (such as being a part of a group called third graders). In the view of the urban schoolmen of the late nineteenth century, uncontaminated by the progressive rhetoric which fudged the relationships of authority in the twentieth century, schools should inculcate obedience to bureaucratic norms overtly and with zest. In 1874, William T. Harris and Duane Doty wrote a pamphlet on The Theory of Education in the United States of America which was co-signed by 77 college presidents and city and state superintendents of schools. This statement, then, represented not simply the philosophy of the authors, but a consensus of educational leaders. Harris and Doty wrote that: "Military precision is required in the maneuvering of classes. Great stress is laid upon (1) punctuality, (2) regularity, (3) attention, and (4) silence, as habits necessary through life for successful combination with one's fellow-men in an industrial and commercial civilization." Observers of urban schools, both friendly and critical, reinforced the truth of this statement.[43]

Punctuality was a favorite theme of schoolmen of the time, for it was clear that children's behavior must be precisely controlled, reliable and predictable. Well into the twentieth century superintendents continued to report attendance and tardiness statistics down to the second and third decimal point. In Portland, in 1876, the school board adopted a policy of suspending any student who was absent (except for sickness) or tardy four times in four consecutive weeks, and they fined principals for not opening their schools at 8:30 a.m. sharp. "A school with an enrollment of fifty, daily attendance fifty and none tardy," wrote Superintendent King in 1876, "is a grand sight to behold in the morning and afternoon." So great was the stigma of tardiness and so keen the competition among schools for a good record, that children sometimes hid all day to avoid coming into class late, and some teachers sent children home to avoid marking them tardy. Clearly punctuality was a very basic part of the curriculum, as were obedience, precision, and silence.[44]

To see how such qualities were taught in the classroom, let us accompany some observers as they visited actual urban schools during the latter half of the nineteenth century. A Scottish writer, David MacRae, reported what he saw in Ward School No. 50 in New York City in the late 1860's. At the morning assembly, the room was filled with 500 to 600 children between the ages of five and twelve. MacRae was impressed with their appearance: "The were neatly (many of them beautifully) dressed, and all scrupulously clean -- a point to which great attention is paid in American schools. Any scholar coming with untidy clothes, or with unwashed face or hands, or unbrushed hair, would be sent home at once." The children were perfectly quiet when the lady principal took her place and conducted the object lesson for the day. "What are you to do when you see any object?" asked the principal. "We are to think of its qualities, parts, uses, colours, and form," replied the pupils in unison. She then showed the children a clay pipe. After the children had said what they knew about pipes and tobacco, the principal rang a small bell, thereby announcing the close of the lesson and the mass of pupils "rose and moved off with military precision to their various recitation rooms." The principal explained to MacRae that she had achieved such careful order by appealing to the self-respect and sense of shame of the students. As he went with her to the recitation rooms, he found children eagerly competing with one another. After the teacher gave them a problem in arithmetic "everyone dashed into the calculation with a rapidity of an excited terrier chasing a ball" to see which one could come up with the right answer first. In the reading lesson, the teacher stressed an exaggerated articulation of each word so that the students might escape linguistic delinquency. They were no more allowed to be slovenly in their pronunciation than in their appearance.[45]

In 1867, a committee appointed by the Baltimore School Board visited the public schools in Philadelphia, New York, Brooklyn, and Boston. Like MacRae, they were impressed by classrooms in New York City. School No. 14 contained 507 pupils in the Boys Department, 461 in the Girls Department and 1309 in the Primary Department, all in the same building. The children alternated between recitations in the smaller rooms and large group instruction in an assembly hall which was created by moving aside the partitions that separated two of the largest rooms in the building. Into this single space came all the boys and girls of the grammar department: "the movements of the classes from the class rooms to the large assembling room were regulated by pianos, two of which were in each of the large rooms. All the changes were performed in marches, some in the usual step, others in the double quick time of the military development. Calisthenic exercises were performed with great precision under the direction of assistant teachers. The regularity of movement in so large a number of children, all well dressed, and many of them tastefully attired, was truly interesting." The children of the Primary Department performed similar marches and calisthenics, again the visitors were delighted with "the regularity of their movements, their simultaneous enunciation," and the way in which "a thousand little forms are as erect in their seats, as though they were riveted there by some process of mechanism." In Boston, likewise, the Baltimore visitors applauded the order that they discovered in the operation of the Emerson School: "Every pupil appears to be in anxious waiting for the word of the teacher, and when issued it is promptly obeyed by the class. The movements and utterances of the class are as nearly simultaneous and similar as they can be .... This habit is wrought by watchfulness and constant labor on the part of the teacher. To accomplish it a thorough drill is necessary."[46]

In 1878, an anonymous author described "Two Representative Schools" of New York City which were "examples of the highest development of the theories now most popular among Boards of Education." Although the article was highly critical of the way in which Public School No. 14 in New York City stamped out individuality and spontaneity in pupil and teacher alike, the picture of the school coresponded closely with descriptions by its admirers. Again, there were the hundreds of perfectly silent children, eyes fixed straight ahead, sitting "as regular as rows of machine-planted corn." When the Directress came into the assembly at a given signal "every face turned instantly, as though on a pivot," to greet the principal, then swinging back again in unison upon the giving of the further signal. Recitations followed a carefully prescribed order. The teacher would propose a problem in arithmetic, "Down would go all the slates and the work of ciphering would proceed, and as the work was completed by different members of the class, the slates would pop up against the breast, one after another; and when a boy was called upon to explain, up he would jump, rattle off his explanation, and then thump down again amidst the perfect stillness of the rest ...." How did the teachers preserve such order in a school which included members of "many different social classes"? By ironclad routine which kept each child busy at a specific task every minute, by competition for that scarce commodity, praise, and by the "terror of degradation." "Some 400 pupils cannot, for want of space, be admitted to the assembly-room," explained the author, "and it would be a source of great shame to any pupil in the room to have to give place to one without." As Colin Greer has observed,much of urban schooling was predicated on an economy of scarcity. Not only did many cities fall far behind in providing seats for children in school, but once in school, it was assumed that some children would be losers as children failed or succeeded according to rigid rules of behavior and performance. The faults of such a system, wrote the critic of P.S. 14, were "The inseparable attendants of wholesale schooling. To manage successfully a hundred children, or even half that number, the teacher must reduce them as nearly as possible to a unit."[47]

In her study of classroom behavior in nineteenth century schools, Barbara Joan Finkelstein writes that teachers were so committed to discipline that they believed that "the acquisition of knowledge represented a triumph of the will as well as the intellect. Consistently, in every kind of teaching situation, we find that teachers treated academic failure, not as a reflection of their own inabilities as instructors, but as evidence of the students' personal and moral recalcitrance; and this tendency was institutionalized on a grand scale in the village and city schools of the 1850's, 1860's, and 1870's. Indeed the evidence suggests that teachers in every setting only rarely distinguished between the intellectual and the social aspects of student behavior as they meted out rewards and punishments." To many teachers, corporal punishment or humiliation seemed appropriate treatment for children who did not learn their lessons, for academic incompetence was a sign of moral laxity. Many school systems created special classrooms for truants, for rebellious children from the regular classrooms, and for those who were over age because they had failed to pass their examinations for promotion. The creative child probably suffered agonies of boredom, since spontaneity was regarded only as a form of naughtiness in such a system. The child whose home and neighborhood background was culturally different from that of the standard curriculum also suffered, for ethnocentric teachers might have regarded his inability to learn as a sympton of moral depravity. But one result of the classroom's very rigidity and size was that it offered fewer opportunities for teachers to separate individuals into preconceived categories based on a shaky and often biased "science" of education. If the pupil conformed to the teacher's set standards of learning and deportment. In other words, if she passed a performance tests, she succeeded.[48]

Through an elaborate system of gradation, programmed curriculum, examinations, and rules for "deportment," then, the pupil learned the meaning of obedience, regularity, and precision. He learned to "toe the line" -- a phrase that today has lost its literal significance to most people. Joseph Rice, who visited hundreds of urban classrooms in the 1890's, described what it meant in one school. During recitation periods, when students were to demonstrate that they had memorized the text, children were expected, said Rice, "to stand on the line, perfectly motionless, their bodies erect, their knees and feet together, the tips of their shoes touching the edge of a board in the floor." The teacher paid as much attention to the state of their toes and knees as to the words of their mouths: "How can you learn anything," asked one woman, "with your knees and toes out of order?" [49]

The capstone of the educational arch of city systems was the high school. During the nineteenth century the public high school was predominately an urban phenomenon, for relatively few small towns or villages had the tax base, the desire, or the population density to support a full-fledged public secondary school (although sometimes a room or two attached to the grammar school might be called, in the inflationary terminology of educational boosterism, a "high school"). Private academies were common in the countryside and villages, and it was probably not until the 1880's that enrollment in public secondary schools surpassed that in private institutions. Indeed, the distinction between "public" and "private" secondary schools was very vague since often states or localities gave scholarship funds or other aid to academies.

In cities, however, the creation of high schools often helped to unify a disparate collection of lower schools into a unified system; central boards and the superintendent normally controlled high schools even where ward boards persisted, and requirements for admission to the high school gave some degree of control over grammar schools. Schoolmen boasted that competition to get into high school fostered useful emulation in the lower grades. In Chicago the newspapers referred to the annual examinations as the "Olympic Games."[50]

The high school did help to create a hierarchy of schooling, but it is essential to understand its limited clientele and functions during the nineteenth century. Only a small fraction of students attended public secondary schools before 1900, and of these only a tiny number actually graduated. Although educational statistics need to be interpreted guardedly because of poor returns from local and state officials and the vagueness and shifting character of the classification of "secondary schools," the U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates that in 1870 only about 16,000 students graduated from public and private high schools and only 2 percent of the population aged 17; by 1890, the comparable statistics were 43,731 and 3.5 percent; and in 1900, 94,883 and 6.4 percent. The 202,926 students in public high schools in 1890 represented 1 percent of the total population, and only 10 percent of that number graduated. Only 732 pupils out of a total enrollment of 185,000 were seniors in high school in Chicago in 1894.[51]

Although schoolmen liked to refer to the high school as "the people's college," they built fancy Gothic structures to compete with the most ornate academies in attracting the attendance of the prosperous. Promoters had a conspicuous edifice complex; men like Philbrick described the "noble edifice" in one city or the "palatial edifice" in another. Yet they were sensitive to the frequent accusation that they were taxing poor people to pay for elegant schooling of the rich or the complaints of self-made men that they were turning out dandies who would scorn manual labor. From the tone of their rhetoric, one suspects that there was at least some truth in both charges.

Data on the social composition of high school population is scanty but what there is suggests that the schools probably served mostly the upper reaches of the middle class. Michael Katz found that of 111 families served by the Somerville High School, 57 percent would so qualify, and none were children of factory operatives, ordinary laborers, or Irish (there were 1500 Irish immigrants in the city). Selwyn Troen found that, in 1880, only 31.7 percent of the children of unskilled workers in St. Louis were in school from ages 13 to 16, compared with 64.1 percent for white-collar workers and 80 percent for professional families. The evidence is mixed, however: in Erie, Pennsylvania, the high school principal reported in 1889 that 200 of the 347 pupils had parents whose property assessment was less than $500, and 54 of those had no property assessment. Philbrick told anecdotes of the friendship in high school of "the son of a cultured and wealthy merchant and the son of a very poor immigrant" and quoted the comment of an Irish high school graduate that anyone who attacked free secondary education should be considered "an enemy to his country."[52]

Whatever the class origins of individual students, it is clear that most schoolmen before 1900 regarded the high school as a minority institution designed for the bright child whose parents were willing and able to forego her or his labor. In 1893 the NEA Committee of Ten declared that the function of high schools was "to prepare for the duties of life that small proportion of all the children in the country ... who show themselves able to profit by an education prolonged to the eighteenth year, and whose parents are able to support them while they remain so long at school." That committee believed that only a few of those graduates would go on to college but maintained that the rigorous training of the mind through academic subjects would best fit anyone for any of "the duties of life" -- which was another way of saying that the vocational relevance of secondary education was remote at best. One indication that young people and their parents did not regard high school as a necessary step on most career ladders was not only the small size of the graduating classes but also the sex ratio: girls consistently outnumbered boys (in 1890, 57.6 percent of the pupils enrolled were girls, 64.8 percent of the graduates). "Boys are too anxious, perhaps, to take a short cut to business," observed Philbrick. For a minority of the girls, to be sure, high school normal classes did offer a career-line of teaching (almost no boys were enrolled in the normal departments that had appeared in 21 cities by 1885). But in a time when few employers required high school graduation for jobs and when entry positions were abundant for youth with meager schooling, the great majority of the population acted as if the high school was superfluous. For this reason one cannot judge popular belief in the principle of public education by the criterion of support for the high school. The whole equation would change, of course, when the high school became a mass institution during the twentieth century.[53]

Like many other segments of the work force, nineteenth century teachers had minimal formal schooling when judged by the standards of the 1970's. Nationwide, the typical teacher had only attended grammar school. Cities and towns with graded schools claimed the cream of the crop, but only about one-fourth of such employees had received a normal school diploma, and customarily normal training took place at the secondary level. Thus, at best, most urban teachers probably had attended high school. Given the widespread assumption among school superintendents that teachers should be subordinate -- should toe the line, as their students did -- this was an advantage, "such teachers will almost invariably be in hearty sympathy with graded-school work," wrote William Payne. "Teachers will teach chiefly as they have been taught, and will manage pupils as they themselves were managed during the course of their education." To Payne, the lesson for the manager and the managed was clear: "Organization implies subordination. If there is to be a plan, some one must devise it, while others must execute it. As the members of the human body execute the behests of the supreme intelligence, so in human society the many must follow the direction of the few." Clearly "the work of instruction follows the law which prevails in all other industries -- differentiation, classification, system ...." One man should control this system, "vested with sufficient authority to keep all subordinates in their proper places, and at their assigned tasks." Like most other schoolmen who preceded him, Payne assumed that the boss -- the "supreme intelligence" of the anology -- would be male.

Henry Barnard, for example, had tossed many rhetorical bouquets to the underpaid and overworked women teachers -- "in whose own hearts, love, hope and patience, have first kept school" -- but wrote that the principal in the graded school "may be selected with special reference to his ability in arranging the studies, and order of exercises of the school, in administering its discipline, in adapting moral instruction to individual scholars, and superintending the operations of each classroom, so as to secure the harmonious action and progress of every department." His ability, note.[54]

Hierarchical organization of schools and male chauvinism fit as hand to glove. The system required subordination; women were subordinate to men in the larger society; the employment of women as teachers thus augmented authority of the largely male administrative leadership. An anonymous writer in Harpers in 1878 reported that "women teachers are often preferred by superintendents because they are more willing to comply with established regulations and less likely to ride headstrong hobbies ...." It seemed but an absurd dream to imagine "what would happen if that indefatigable, overworked class, the school-teachers, should have a 'strike.'" If teachers have advice to give their superior, said the Denver superintendent, "it is to be given as the good daughter talks with the father .... The dictation must come from the other end." In 1841, the Boston school commended women teachers because they were unambitious, frugal, and filial: "they are less intent and scheming for future honors or emoluments, [than men]. As a class, they never look forward, as young men almost invariably do, to a period of legal emancipation from parental control ...." One reason for the general bias against married teachers appears to be that they were less likely to be acquiescent than unmarried ones. In New York state, a legislator argued that women make better teachers of young children because of their "very weakness," for they taught pupils whose "intellectual faculties" were less developed than the affections. Thus women had more "access to the heart" of little children because of their "peculiar faculties." In return for "complaisant homage," social custom required women to adopt certain roles -- to be docile rather than questioning, perceptive of feelings rather than strong of intellect, content with subordination rather than ambitious, timid rather than adventurous -- that fit them well to toe the line in the one best system.[55]

When schoolmen discussed teachers at conventions of the NEA or in official reports, they customarily did so from a supervisor's perspective: how can inefficient teachers be improved or dismissed? How should teachers be selected? How much responsibility should teachers be given? Almost always the passive voice. One superintendent said it was idle for teachers to read professional books since they looked to him for proper methods.[56]

The employment of women appears to correlate well with the pace of bureaucratization. Early advocates of graded schools claimed that the division of labor and the presence of male principals would enable women to handle their jobs efficiently and to control the older boys (though the presumed superiority of men as executives and disciplinarians seems to rest more on male vanity than on evidence). In 1911, Lotus D. Coffman studied the social composition of the population of teachers, concluding that the vast increase of women in "the teaching force has been due in part to the changed character of the management of the public schools, to the specialization of labor within the school, to the narrowing of the intellectual range or versatility required of teachers, and to the willingness of women to work for less than men." In towns and cities, he observed, almost "all of the graded school positions have been preempted by women; men still survive in public school work as 'managing' or executive officers."[57]

Statistics on teachers are approximations at best, but it appears that the percentages of woman teachers in the United States increased from 59 percent in 1870 to 70 percent in 1900 to 86 percent in 1920. Woman teachers clearly predominated in cities. In 1885 in fourteen representative cities, women outnumbered men ten to one. By 1905 only 2 percent of teachers in elementary schools were men, as reported in a careful study of 467 cities done for the NEA by Carroll Wright. By contrast, 38 percent of the elementary school principals were men. In the high schools, which generally paid more and were more prestigious than the elementary schools, 94 percent of the principals and 38 percent of the teachers were men.[58]

Men not only had a disproportionate share of the higher-paying and high-status jobs, but they were also commonly paid more for doing the same work that women did. Indeed, most candid schoolmen agreed that the cheapness of women was a major reason for their displacing men. Teaching was one of the few large and respectable occupations open to women, and since they were usually willing to work for less than men, school boards were eager to cut costs by employing them. Here are some estimates of the weekly earnings of men and women in city schools:

Year	Men	Women
1870	$35	$12
1880	31	12
1890	33	13
1900	32	14
1910	36	17
1920	61	36

The average salaries of women and men reported in the 1905 NEA study of 467 city systems are as follows:

	Women	Men
elementary teacher	$650	$1,161
elementary principal	970	1,542
high school teachers	903	1,303

Sexual discrimination was normally frozen into the official published pay scales rather than being the result of individual bargaining. In 1861-62, for example, St. Louis paid male principals $800 and female principals $400, while in 1904 New York paid a maximum salary of $2,400 to male high school teachers, $1,900 to female.[59]

One reason why men continued to earn more money than women was that a number of leading educators began to have doubts about the benefits of the feminization of the profession and held out added pay as an inducement to attract men and to retain them as the managers. The reports of the U.S. Commissioner of Education reveal some of these changing attitudes. In 1873 the Commissioner noted that some educators favored the employment of women as "school-officers," reporting that a "daughter of Ralph Waldo Emerson ... is said to have done valuable service" as a member of the Concord school committee, while "in the "flexible and sometimes impulsive West" women were actually running for state and county superintendent. Cautiously, he said it was too early to judge the wisdom of the experiment. By 1887 the Commissioner still straddled the fence, reporting the opinions of superintendents in Macon, Georgia, and Pawtucket, R.I., that men were needed as principals of elementary schools since they had more executive ability and were needed as disciplinarians; but also saying that the substitution of women for men in the higher grades had done no damage. By 1892 the Commissioner was worried, for women now not only were monopolizing the assistant teacher slots but in some places "have captured the principalships as well as the minor positions." How to preserve male principalships "presents new difficulties. The assistants' positions were formerly the training schools of principals, and from them it was always easy to select a man to fill any vacancy; but now it becomes necessary either to employ a new and untried college graduate, to import a rustic schoolmaster, or to transfer a high-school assistant." Confronted with this threat to male supremacy, the Philadelphia schools created a "School of Pedagogy" limited to men and adopted a rule that only men would be hired in the two top grades of the boys'grammar schools. The Commissioner quoted the president of the Chicago school board, endorsing his "strong stand for the restoration of the element of masculinity." Similar fears of the effects of feminine teachers on boys came in crescendo from authorities as disparate as G. Stanley Hall, the flamboyant psychologist, and John Philbrick, the somber bureaucrat.[60]

The doughty feminist Mary Abigail Dodge was outraged by male chauvinism and what she called "The Degradation of the Teacher." A former schoolteacher, now free to speak as a free-lance writer, she published in 1880 a nineteenth-century version of Up the Down Staircase, but with a feminist twist. Here were women teachers, she said, forced to toe the line, paid less than men for the same work and often barred from advancement because of their sex, bullied by superintendents and school board members who were their intellectual and social inferiors -- and now told that they had a bad effect on boys! Superintendents "are grinding their organs in the public halls. ...taking to themselves the credit of whatever value is in the schools ... hindering and bothering, discouraging and demoralizing the teachers by giving them so many useless things to do ...." The men get the money and the credit; the women do all the important work for a mere pittance. "Nothing can more truly and tersely describe the work of school superintendents than 'the form of blanks' -- the shape of nothing." All the time writing silly reports and gathering meaningless statistics for the administrators, the teachers hardly have time to teach. The kind of man who is willing to supervise such a petty system is mediocre by definition. "No man is going to act as nursery governess to female school-teachers who is good for anything else. The men who are capable of doing a man's work in the world will have no time to spend in twitching a woman's apron-strings and hindering her from doing hers."61

Yet those very men pompously declaim on how much better male teachers are than female. "Suppose that instead of trying to find out why men are more earnest, devoted, and effective teachers than women," snorted Ms. Dodge, "we spend a little time in ascertaining whether they are such." Her answer was not surprising: "Reflecting on sundry male teachers we have known, to whom the greatest boon that justice could grant would be the mercy of its silence, and the many women, cultivated, ladylike, self-reliant, commanding, thorough, untiring; and then listening to the felicitations of that groups of schoolmasters over their own assumed superiority, the only appropriate argument in response seems to be that of the poet:

'To take them as I would mischievous boys,
And shake their heads together.'"

No, the fact is that "women preponderate in schools, not because they soften the boys, but because they cost less than men."62

In part, male concern over the "feminization of teaching" did concern the effects of schooling on children, but it was also -- and perhaps primarily -- a response to a growing assertiveness of women at the end of the century. I shall return to this subject in Part four, but here I should like to anticipate that story of woman power in order to illustrate an important feature of the bureaucracies the schoolmen were creating. As we have seen, it was possible to import into the organization the subordination of women that characterized the outside society and to make that sexism work to strengthen the authority of the male managers. At the same time, the ability of school bureaucracies to make centralized decisions about thousands of workers, and their ostensible commitment to norms of merit and impartiality, rendered rapid change possible as women gained power and learned how to use it. [63]

Power came in different forms. In the West, for example, women early gained the vote on school matters and the right to hold school officer. It is no coincidence that in 1901 the only woman state superintendents of instruction were in Colorado and Idaho and that women county superintendents appeared most frequently in states on the plains and far West. Equal pay for city teachers was often the result of organization on their part. In San Francisco the feisty suffragette, teacher, and member of the Knights of Labor, Kate Kennedy, lobbied successfully with her sister colleagues for a legislative act in 1870 that awarded women the same pay as men for equal work. Margaret Haley in Chicago and Grace Strachan in New York were strategists for massive leagues of woman teachers and won justice that had been denied them when they had no power. After women received the vote in 1920, within a decade ten states passed laws providing equal pay for equal work. As in the case of the armed forces, which rapidly became desegregated after World War II, the city school bureaucracies were capable of reacting quickly to equalize the pay of men and women *once women achieved the power to influence decisions*. Equal pay for women no more eliminated sexism in schools than desegregation destroyed racism in the armed forces, but in both instances the response of the organizations illustrated that the bureaucratic form could lend itself to the righting of specific injustices quite as much as to the perpetuation of the inequities of the larger society. Indeed, the bureaucratic norms of reward by merit and performance -- however inadequately realized in practice -- in theory rendered preference by sex, or race, or religion, or class irrelevant and noxious.[64]

In Portland, Oregon, the school board commanded the teachers in 1883 to "cheerfully cooperate with the City Superintendent." In describing his duties in his report for 1888 the superintendent himself was not very cheerful, however. He not only had to supervise and direct and examine every class from the "infant class ... to the senior class in the high school," but also had to watch over plumbing and furnaces, sidewalks and supplies; plan schoolhouses and supervise their construction; write reports and copy-read all printing; "in short, ... such a round of duties, that no one -- except a confirmed egotist -- or one who knows himself to be endowed with the capacity, talent, and tact of a factotem -- 'a man of all work' -- could have reasonably expected an unchallenged administration." [65]

The superintendent's essential job was to enforce all the decrees of the school board. That this was no small task is illustrated by Portland's set of Rules and Regulations of 1883 which codified practices standardized during the previous decade. There was bureaucracy, in black and white: the classification of schools; the uniform curriculum; the hierarchy of offices and delineation of duties; the time schedules; the elaborate plans of examinations and promotions. As chief policeman, the superintendent had to "see that the grade work is strictly followed, that the rules and regulations are observed and enforced and /_to_/ report any and all delinquencies to the Board." Principals were the intermediate inspectors and disciplinarians, instructed by the Board, among other chores, "to prohibit the playing of marbles on or about the school premises." Nothing was left to chance in the duties of teachers: they were told to open the windows at recess, to suspend a thermometer from the ceilings and to keep their rooms between 67 and 71 degrees; to assemble for at least two hours at their monthly institute (they were fined two dollars for failing to attend and one dollar for being tardy); and "to subscribe for, take and read, at least one periodical devoted to educational work." Uneven in education and skill, the teachers were to be governed by rules, not professional norms. Once a month the teachers read to the students the "Duties of Pupils" which commanded obedience, punctuality, industry, and respect for school property. Thirty-seven rules dealt with absence, tardiness, excuses, and suspensions; eight outlined examinations and promotions. Obscurity was not one of the faults of the Portland Schools, rigidity was.[66]

To subordinates, the superintendent of schools might appear to be autocratic, but his actual powers depended a great deal on the willingness of the school board to delegate decisions and on the political and social climate of the community he served. In the early period of the superintendency, Philbrick observed, many schoolmen "were baffled, hampered, and humiliated. They had to make bricks without straw. They had to build the walls with the trowel in one hand and the weapon of defence in the other." In San Francisco the elected superintendents lasted, on the average, two years. One of them described his task thus in 1869: the superintendent "must listen to everybody's wants and complaints; accommodate all and displease none; cater to caprices; combat, yet often succumb to, prejudices; ... do everything and know everything; or else he is a very negligent, unfaithful, unkind, unjust, and shortcoming Superintendent."[67]

Despite such pressures -- which we shall analyze shortly -- the old timers had few doubts about the worth of the one best system which they were trying to create. To be sure, critics outside the system began to claim, said Philbrick, that supervision was "too much occupied with the 'perfecting of the machine;' that it magnifies the importance of the mechanical and routine operations of the school;

that it mistakes the means for the ends ... that it treats pupils en masse and ignores individuality ... and so on to the end of the chapter." To Philbrick this was the nonsense purveyed by people who don't know that "the great and undisputed success of our city systems is the result of their good organization."[68]

But increasingly schoolmen themselves began to wonder if they had created a monster. "I have known supervisors to go about from schoolroom to schoolroom," said Superintendent Gilbert of Rochester, "note-book and pencil in hand, sitting for a while in each room like malignant sphinxes, eying the frightened teacher, who in his terror does everything wrong, and then marking him in a doomsday book." Were teachers merely becoming petty bureaucrats?" "Too often in our great city systems," Gilbert declared, "teachers are judged by their ability to run along smoothly in a well-oiled machine .... I have known teachers full of love of youth, possessed of extraordinary inspirational power and ability to make children think, work, and learn, driven from the school system because they did not readily untie red tape." When the machine destroys the initiative of the teacher, said Gilbert, and turns her into a transmitter of "dessicated information ... then it is time to smash the machine; and there are countless machines all over this land that need to be smashed!" [69]

Although a school administrator himself, Gilbert had come to believethat the search for the one best system during the previous decades had resulted not in the "ideal standard" sought by a generation of city superintendents but instead in organizational pathology. Looking back at the quest for order, he realized that in congested communities "ordinary economy requires unification, condensation, and division of labor. Schools must be grouped and graded ... as systems grow, increasingly closer organization is necessary." But those in charge began to "consider it their chief vocation to keep the machine running, until in time the machine itself is so magnified in their sight as to appear of chief consequence. So the education of the child, for which the machine was created, is too frequently subordinated to the running of the machine itself ...." What Gilbert and many others described was a displacement of goals, a common fault of bureaucratic organizations. Dissenters in the nineteenth century, as now, argued that schoolmen had created not the one best system but a costly and repressive bureaucracy.[70]

4. Dissenters

To Horace Mann and most of his successors as spokesmen for public education during the nineteenth century, the supporters of the common school were the children of light and opponents the children of darkness. Since the schools were the panacea for crime, poverty, and vice, to oppose them was to ally with evil. This tradition continued in influential writings of educational historians. Witness a classic "alignment of interests" for and against public schools during the mid-nineteenth century:

For	Against
"Citizens of the Republic"	Belonging to the old aristocratic class
Philanthropists and humanitarians	Politicians of small vision
Public men of large vision	The ignorant, narrow-minded and penurious
The intelligent workingmen in the cities	The non-English-speaking classes
"New-England men"	

Here is a morality play masquerading as sober history. But the tradition of cloaking the public school establishment in virtue served its purposes well; schoolmen were able to denounce any attacks on their ideology or pradtices as the work of "enemies of democracy" or selfish men of small vision. One consequence has been that we lack to this day any comprehensive account of the long history of dissent against the public school establishment.[71]

But there have been dissenters of all kinds. In the present crisis of authority in American public education, there are those who criticize the rigidity of vast urban bureaucracies, those who claim that the schools are racist and sexist, those who argue that the common school produces conformist servants of mediocrity, those who argue that education has been the opiate of the people and an excuse for neglecting basic social change. These and other charges are hardly new, but they have been overshadowed by the consensus earnestly sought and successfully won by the educational statesmen of the last century.[72]

Even as schoolmen were struggling to create urban systems, critics attacked the structure and effects of school bureaucracies. In 1878 Professor B.A. Hinsdale of Ohio (later to become superintendent of schools in Cleveland) wrote that "for a generation our schoolmasters have gone on developing the system, the public supporting them with abundant money and influence; and now, when the work is called perfect, and we are called on to fall down and worship ... it is seen by the discerning that the Graded School is only an appliance, that it leaves education to brain and heart where it was before, and that the new system has become inflexible and tyrannous." His special target was the mindless administrator whose trained incapacity blinded him to the results of his work, namely archaic and rigid ritual. This martinet thinks of the graded school as "a solid framework, containing 12 compartments" which he shoves "forward at a uniform velocity, without regard to the surface of the ground or the length of the children's legs." Absorbed in trivia, he became despotic towards subordinates: "there is no place where a crochety, a bumptious, or tyrannical man can do more harm than at the head of the public schools of a large city." Children are forced to learn twaddle -- like "the important fact that 'napiform' means turnip-shaped" -- while in practice they "learn little in the Public Schools but the rules."[73]

Others joined in the assault on superintendents and the mechanical character of city schools. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., fresh from his attempts to reform the schools as school board member in Quincy, Massachusetts, said that typical school administrators were mere "drill sergeants" and described average city school bureaucracy as "a combination of the cotton mill and the railroad with the model State-prison." President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard denounced mass education "which almost inevitably adopts military or mechanical methods" and deplored the inflexible routine which degraded the "teacher's function .... There are many persons who say that teachers in the graded schools ought not to serve more than ten years at the outside, for the reason that they become dull, formal, and uninteresting; but, if this be true, it is certainly the fault of the system rather than of the teachers." Mary Abigail Dodge deplored the use of the factory as analogy for the school. "The thing which a school ought not to be, the thing which our system of supervision is strenuously trying to make the school into, is a factory, with the superintendents for overseers and the teachers for workmen." Instead, she argued, "teachers ought to run the schools exactly as doctors run a hospital." "The superintendent is a mere modern invention for receiving a salary, whose beneficence seldom rises above harmlessness, whose activity is usually mischievous."[74]

The impact of the rigid urban school on the child was the main concern of Joseph Mayer Rice, a pediatrician who had studies "educational science" in Germany. Rice visited schools in thirty-six cities in 1892 to prepare a series of articles for The Forum. What he saw profoundly depressed and angered him. The typical "atmosphere of the mechanical school is damp and chilly" whereas a classroom should be "glowing with life and warmth." Teachers followed prescribed routine, fearful of losing their jobs, forgetful of the child, although their first task was to strive "to understand him, to interest him, and to make him happy."[75]

In city after city, Rice witnessed the slaughter of the innocents. In St. Louis the Superintendent gave examinations to test both students and teachers and observed classes like a military inspector to see if the program was being followed. "The superintendent here reigns supreme; his rulings are arbitrary; his word is law. But in exercising his license he deprives the child of his liberty ... the years of childhood are converted into years of slavery." The prime rule of many schools was to "save the minutes." Children were forced to sit witheyes facing forward; even when they handed material to their neighbors, they stared "straight in front of them" and groped sideways to pass or receive papers. Pupils popped up and down like automats when they recited definitions: "things appear as if the two children occupying adjoining seats were sitting upon the opposite poles of an invisible see-saw, so that the descending child necessarily raises the pupil next to him to his feet." Such recitations were just memorized "facts" from the textbooks -- after all, that was what the examinations tested. Rice attended one physiology class where a ten-year old student cried out that alcohol "dwarfs -- the body, -- the mind, -- and soul, -- weakens -- the -- heart, -- and -- enfeebles -- the -- memory."[76]

An underlying assumption of much of this teaching, Rice wrote, was that the unschooled child knew nothing of any worth; hence teachers had to start from scratch in implanting the right ideas. Charles Gilbert, who served as superintendent in St. Paul, Newark, and Rochester, found that ethnocentric teachers often gave sermons to children on drinking, manners, and morals without stopping to think of the patterns of life the pupils knew at home. These homilies sometimes boomeranged, he said: "the superintendent in one of our larger cities ... went into a school, and, standing before the children with his hands in his pockets, asked them who he was ... finally a timid hand was raised and a small lad ... remarked, 'You're no gentleman.' "The superintendent was puzzled and the teacher embarrassed, but the children nodded approval of the answer,"'Certainly, you're no gentlemen.' A little inquiry developed the fact that the teacher had told the children that no gentleman stood with his hands in his pockets." Gilbert then gave advice more often ignored than followed in those school bureaucracies which became insulated from their communities: "Recognize always the superiority of the home and its sacredness, and under no circumstances weaken the authority of the parent."[77]

While dissenting intellectuals criticized the one best system of urban education for its mechanical routines and its deadening effect on children, a number of citizens across the country fretted about the costs of new fads and frills like the high school or instruction in music or drawing. The old common school was good enough, they said; this new establishment is being run by professionals for their own advantage. In 1880, in Portland, Oregon, a crusty and conservative newspaper editor, Harvey Scott, launched an attack on the "cumbrous, complex and costly system" of the public schools. "In nearly every city there has been growing up during the last ten years an elaborate public school machinery," he wrote, "largely managed and directed by those whom it supports. Nominally it is controlled by the taxpayers of the districts, but in reality by associations of persons who live as professionals upon the public school system." What was needed, he said, was a return to "the simple yet effective system of the old common schools." Scott was sure that citizens were "decidedly in favor of reducing the 'establishment,' -- as the system has been called since it grew to its present proportions." Methods of instruction have grown "to a complexity which puzzles the learner and which works the teacher harder out of school hours in making up trivial reports, calculated on percentages of proficiency, behavior, etc., than in the ... schoolroom." Perhaps teachers not inclined to "cheerfully cooperate with the City Superintendent" had been talking out of turn.[78]

Scott sent reporters out to gather the opinions of the businessmen of Portland about the "new-fangled, finical stuff" going on in the schools; the complex machinery, the new subjects introduced into the grades and the high school (which Scott thought quite unnecessary for the common child). Most of the businessmen interviewed thought common schools necessary, but many questioned the need for expensive "flummery." "A child who has a good English education, if he has any snap about him," said one, "will succeed better than the average graduate of the high school who knows a little of every thing." Another said flatly: "The prominent and useful men of this city are not men of high education." Some glorified the simple, cheap, old-time district school: just the three R's, under the eye and thumb of the community. And one believed that the Portland schools were "being controlled by a school ring and not by taxpayers or directors." Just inculcate the right values cheaply, said the self-made men.[79]

Even George Atkinson, who introduced the graded school to Portland in his days as county superintendent, had misgivings about the dominant role the school was beginning to play in the life of the child. During pioneer days children had learned the discipline of manual labor at home, he wrote in 1879 but as the school took over more and more of the student's life there was a danger that it might "graduate whole regiments of sickly sentimenalists: young gentlemen unused and unfit to work, and young ladies decked in the latest fashion ...." Parents should be forced to certify that their children were doing some manual labor for at least six months of the year, thereby correcting "a good part of the evils which are likely to grow out of improved public instruction."[80]

Atkinson's comment that "evils ... are likely to grow out of improved public instruction" suggests the complexity of the issues raised in the revolt of 1880 against the school bureaucracy. Many motives impelled Scott and his fellow critics. Scott thought the schools were producing "shyster lawyers, quack doctors, razor strop and patent-soap peddlers, book canvassers, and bookkeepers" -- not willing workers. Many opposed higher taxes, especially for secondary education. Some believed that education beyond the common school should be the province of private schools (and they were encouraged in this belief by many private schoolmen who luxuriated in laissez-faire rhetoric). Some wanted the simple days of the old district classroom when parents saw the school as a community center in which families were more citizens than subjects. Others resented the fact that the schools were taking over functions previously performed by family, church and economic units. And above all, the schools seemed to be out of touch, insulated, irresponsible and irresponsive to the public, remote and haughty.[81]

Scott had said that no one could expect self-criticism from the professional establishment; the letters to the press of administrators like Crawford and the state superintendent of public instruction displayed a shocked and self-righteous attitude. The depth of feeling against the bureaucrats was illustrated in a letter from "C" which appeared in the Oregonian on February 26, 1880: "We, the defenders of the common school system, are between the upper and nether millstones, the impracticables and the destructives .... It can only be perpetuated by relieving it of the complex character it has assumed by reason of the inflated, pedantic and self-aggrandizing character of the faculty, who from one entrenched foothold of aggression against popular rights have advanced to another, until we see the result in the superficial, overloaded and over-taxing system now prevailing."[82]

Although most critics of the school bureaucracies did not question the aim of transmitting the dominant culture through public education, other dissenters opposed the common school precisely because they treasured cultural differences which public schoolmen were attempting to destroy. This was particularly true of Catholics, many of whom bitterly resented the Protestant character of public education in nineteenth century America. A priest in Boston said that he had heard a leading citizen there contend "that the only way to elevate the foreign population was to make Protestants of their children." In New York, Bishop John Hughes fought "to detach the children of our holy Faith from the dangerous connection and influence of the public schools." He assailed the textbooks in use that praised Luther as a great man and spoke of "the deceitful Catholics." What the schools taught the Catholic child was that "Catholics are necessarily, morally, intellectually, infallibly, a stupid race."[83]

Added to this anti-Catholic cast of the schools was a disdain of foreigners in general and the Irish in particular. Hughes quoted a textbook that declared that immigration could make America "the common sewer of Ireland," full of drunken and depraved Paddies. That Americans were preoccupied with human pollution in the republic is evident in a metaphor used in Putnam's Monthly to describe the function of the public school: "Our readers will agree with us that for the effectual defecation of the stream of life in a great city, there is but one rectifying agent -- one infallible filter -- the SCHOOL."[84]

Bishop Hughes railed at the techniques used to compel poor children -- many of them Catholic -- to attend schools. The Free School Society -- the paternalistic forerunner of the public schools of that city -- claimed that their schools enjoyed the support of all groups, yet as Hughes said, they had persuaded the Common Council to enact decrees "depriving the parents, in time of need -- even when cold and starvation had set in upon them -- of public relief, unless the children were sent to those or some other schools." They sent out ladies to recruit the poor "by soothing words" and asked employers to coerce parents to send children to school. With all this, fumed Hughes, "they pretend that they have the confidence of the poor."[85]

One result of such discrimination and pressure, as Carl Kaestle observes, was that Catholics increasingly dissented from the common school consensus and sought power over their own educational destiny. Leading schoolmen had trouble understanding these dissenters. In the relatively homogeneous Protestant America of the era before large Catholic immigration, Protestants had agreed to call a truce in their sectarian quarrels at the schoolhouse door and to teach in the common school an evangelical consensus they called "non-sectarian": to read the King James Bible without comment, letting it "speak for itself" as Horace Mann said. For Catholics, of course, this was hardly non-sectarian, and the influence of Protestant teachers and textbooks further undermined their religion. Boldly, many Protestant ministers, schoolmen, and politicians argued that the majority had a right to dictate religious instruction, and since the Catholics were a minority, they had to capitulate.[86]

Catholics could not accept this second class citizenship nor this violation of their religious rights. In city after city they withdrew their children and boycotted the schools. They took their grievances to court but usually gained little satisfaction. Here and there they managed to persuade Protestant allies of the justice of their case. One of these, Samuel Spear, ridiculed the opinion that "'These Catholics who are making so much disturbance about the public schools, being largely of foreign birth, are mere interlopers.'" "This is simply an appeal to anti-Catholic prejudice, as anti-American as it is bigoted and ignorant. It may be well to remember that our Protestant ancestors were all of them a set of interlopers. The Puritans were interlopers. The whole people of the United States, with the exception of the Indians, are either interlopers or the decendents of interlopers. A great and powerful nation started with interloping, and interloping has been one of the elements of its rapid increase."[87]

But court cases, voluntary persuasion, and boycotts did not win justice for the Catholic cause. Increasingly, Catholics realized that only through gaining political leverage and through building their own institutions would they achieve the respect and autonomy they deserved. This quest for Catholic power aroused as much consternation then as the demand for Negro power today. When Catholics sought successfully to eject the Protestant Bible from the common school, Protestants thought that they were attacking the very basis of American institutions. When they demanded the removal of biased textbooks, citizens and school officials thought Catholics were trying to control the curriculum. Politicians saw a Jesuit plot in the desire of Catholics to win public support for their parochial schools, and President Grant predicted that the forces of "superstition" might precipitate a new civil war. Republicans attempted to capitalize on this Protestant backlash.[88]

The quest for Catholic power became successful, particularly in the cities where Catholics gathered in large numbers. They quickly expanded their parochial school system, consolidated political power, especially in the cities, and in the twentieth century began to move, on their own terms, into the American mainstream. Aided by strong leaders in a vigorous hierarchy, proud of their religious and ethnic traditions, growing by immigration and natural increase from one per cent of the population in 1790 to seventeen in 1907, they helped to transform a Protestant America into a pluralistic America.[89]

Then, as now, there were anonymous dissenters to the common school:

> truant boys in Boston, pursued by police officer Oliver Spurr -- most of them Irish children, probably wondering why they had to go to school when there weren't enough seats in classrooms and when signs were appearing all over town, "No Irish Need Apply."
>
> fishermen in Beverly, voting against a high school in 1860, refusing to pay taxes for an institution that served the children of white collar families.
>
> German parents in Cincinnati, refusing to send their children to a school that taught them to scorn their language and culture.[90]

Many such dissenters withheld their taxes or their persons from the schools rather than leaving a written record of their protest.

During the common school crusade a few radical spokesmen for the lower classes questioned whether education could really provide moral redemption or prosperity for the dispossessed. In New York in 1829, Thomas Skidmore asked: "Is a family, where both parents and children are suffering daily, in their animal wants; where excessive toil is required to obtain the little they enjoy; where the unkind and unfriendly passions, generated by such a wretched condition of things, reign with fell sway: is such a family in a situation to receive instruction?" No, he replied, free education under such circumstances was simply an excuse for postponing real equality: "let all remember, that those who undertake to hold back the people from their rights of property ... until education, as they call it, can first be communicated ... either do not understand themselves, or pursue the cause they are pursuing, for the purpose of diverting the people from the possession of these rights; that they may be held in bondage, even yet longer." Education, in short, Skidmore regarded as a substitute for social justice. Horace Greeley agreed: "to the child sent daily out from some rickety hovel or miserable garret to wrestle with Poverty and Misery for such knowledge as the teacher can impart, what true idea or purpose of Education is possible?" Such voices were few and faint, however, and so persuasive were the crusaders, and so hopeful were Americans that education could provide equality of opportunity -- an equal chance at the main chance of wealth -- that only a handful perceived the problem stated by Merle Curti in 1935: "Above all the privileged classes expected the free public school to increase wealth, secure their property, and prevent revolution, while the lower classes thought that popular education would break down class barriers, lift them into the ranks of the rich and bring about, in short, substantial equality." Curti doubted that the schools could do both tasks. "Could they leave the wealthy with all their economic power and privileges and at the same time enable the masses to enter the upper ranks without jeopardizing the position of those already on the top?" His question would gain new significance to dissenters in the 1970's.[91]

5. Political Configurations

Angrily, and often in ritualistic ways, schoolmen answered the charges of dissenters from the common school consensus. But the biggest practical challenge to their quest for the one best system came from laymen who persisted in regarding themselves as part and parcel of the public schools. Both in ward committees and on central boards, these laymen often retained the very powers that the schoolmen sought. Obscure or contradictory allocations of responsibility between boards and professionals produced frequent conflicts between school committees and superintendents. This helped to generate different perceptions of power. Whereas some citizens saw a menacing "school ring" of bureaucrats setting up tyrannical machines, school administrators often felt that they were required to make concrete without cement, that they had responsibility without adequate authority. To many schoolmen, lay decision-making at its best tended to be inefficient meddling in the proper province of the expert; at its worst, the school system became just another source of patronage and graft to boodlers. L.H. Jones, Superintendent of schools in Cleveland, complained in 1896 that "the unscrupulous politician is the greatest enemy that we now have to contend with in public education." Superintendents often found that they could examine teachers but not hire them, write a course of study but not purchase textbooks, compile reports on school architecture but not decide who would construct buildings. In many cities, wrote Jones, "the superintendent is a superintendent only in name."[92]

We have seen that there was tension between the older village forms of governance and the bureaucratic aims of the modernizers. School board politics was the arena in which these different interests clashed during the nineteenth century. Educational politics in cities defies easy categorization or appraisal, for perjorative labels often obscured different world-views. To many bureaucrats the ethnic or religious or party loyalties of pluralistic urban groups were irrelevant distractions from the chief task of building a universalistic, efficient system. To many laymen on boards, such social differences gave urban life its meaning and politics its motive force. Whereas schoolmen often denigrated nomination of teachers by school board members as "patronage" and desired to build meritocratic hierarchies controlled by professionals, many laymen saw teaching as a good job for the girls in the ward and the power of appointment as the natural perquisite of office for board members. (Why otherwise would men donate their time?) One man's participatory democracy was another's chaos. Although teaching Polish to pupils in immigrant wards might have seemed an unwise concession to parochial interests to a bureaucrat, it was a proud affirmation to parents from the old country. Mixed together in the political contests for control were both tangible and symbolic stakes: direct economic benefits derived from jobs and contracts, and intangible but highly important issues centering on ethnic and religious differences. Different groups sought not only cash but reaffirmations of their values and lifestyles in the schools. Just as the closing of saloons on Sundays aroused a bitter controversy between native Protestant prohibitionists, who wanted to stamp out evil at its source, and German and Irish workingmen, who wanted to imbibe with their friends on their one day off, so the school became a target for symbolic crusades.[93]

During the nineteenth century, there was great variety in structures of school governance; this helps to account for the broad spectrum of behavior of school boards and for the diverse roles of superintendents, which ranged virtually from educational dictator to file clerk.

In a number of cities, school boards emerged as the appointed subsidiary of the city council, specialized in function-like departments of public works or police commissioners when tasks became too great for mayors and councils to accomplish without division of labor. Whether from an unwillingness to delegate financial control, or from a desire for checks and balances, city councils sometimes splintered authority for different phases of school administration. In Nashville, as late as 1891, the board of public works retained control over buildings and appointment of janitors, so that "while the board of education had authority to purchase chalk, brooms, pens and soap, it could not supply furniture, stoves, or curtains." In Milwaukee, likewise, the board had no power to relieve overcrowding since the city council was in charge of new building programs. Buffalo had a baroque organizational chart: the mayor appointed janitors, the superintendent teachers; the city council bought sites for new schools, while the department of public works erected them. Fights between school boards and city councils over appropriations and over school functions were commonplace from Providence to Los Angeles.[94]

Further conflict and ambiguity stemmed from division of power among central and ward school boards. In Buffalo taxation for new schools was not assessed city-wide but divided by districts, with the result that the rich sections (most of which had few children) paid a pittance, while the working class residential areas with many children suffered. "Every proposed expansion of school accommodations," wrote the superintendent there in 1887, "had to wait until local objections were overcome by the pressure of imperious needs." Until 1911 the thirty-nine subdistrict boards in Pittsburg had individual rules, raised local taxes, chose teachers, built new schools and maintained old ones -- in fact, assumed all responsibility for education except buying textbooks, paying teachers, and running the high schools and the "colored schools." The subdistrict boards met in a convention every three years to elect a superintendent. Such diffusion of responsibility made seemingly simple decisions -- like where to erect a school or who should pay the bill -- contentious and tangled. Planning for the future was next to impossible. And in cities like Detroit, where school directors on the central committee represented individual wards, competition for funds often resulted in unequal distribution of resources.[95]

In 1885 Philbrick reported that most city school boards were large; members were typically elected from wards rather than citywide and normally held office for two or three years. "Everywhere there are unscrupulous politicians," he wrote, "who do not hesitate to improve every opportunity to sacrifice the interests of the schools to the purposes of the political machine." Because of this danger, cities had tried various remedies: nomination of board members by the mayor, as in New York; appointment by judges, as in Philadelphia; and selection by the city council in Chicago. In other communities citizens discussed counteracting these "political and other corrupting influences" by enfranchizing women and disenfranchinzing illiterates. Philbrick concluded that "it must be admitted that the problem [of proper selection of school boards] remains unsolved; and without doubt this is the supreme educational problem which remains for our educational statesmen to grapple with." School politics were a mare's nest, but nowhere did boards of education achieve the extraordinary split of authority that occurred in New York City's police force in the 1850's when there were actually two groups that claimed jurisdiction over the metropolis, the Democratic-controlled New York Police Department and the force created by the Republican legislature called the Metropolitan Police Department. In 1857, the two police groups clashed in a riot that was halted by the lucky intervention of an Army regiment. Less spectacular, but no less important, conflicts of jurisdiction and conflicts of value were endemic in the politics of schools in many cities.[96]

Political cultures in new cities in the West and South often differed from those in the older cities of the Northeast. In a number of cities relative peace reigned among school board members and superintendents. During the thirty year superintendency of Aaron Gove, Denver had one such system. No city came closer to the ideal, said Philbrick: "the members of this board have been, from its origin, so far as I was able to ascertain by inquiry on the ground, unexceptionable in respect to character, ability, and faithful devotion to the interests of the schools." Another moderate-sized western city that won high marks for its school board from educators was Kansas City, Missouri, during the tenure of James M. Greenwood. Superintendent Greenwood "gave early attention to the composition of the school board. To insure the selection of high-class citizens, and to obviate the chance of political influence, he secured a nonpartisan school board and long tenure for the members." The president of the Kansas City board testified that the members conducted their work in a businesslike manner, without speeches to the galleries, and reached all decisions by corporate consensus. In Birmingham, Alabama, John H. Phillips served as superintendent of schools for thirty-eight years from 1883 to 1921. There a commission "made up of leading citizens" appointed a board of five members composed of "the best qualified citizens."[97]

As we have seen in examining the work of lay school board members in the "distended village," the traditional role model for the school committeeman included visiting schools, overseeing almost all administrative details, and making most fiscal decisions. The degree to which school board members were willing to delegate some of these functions to professionals depended on many variables: their trust in the superintendent -- or even their awe of him; their interest in making a personal profit or gaining political influence; their desire to represent the interests of a particular locality or group; their commitment to expertise and specialization of function; their available time and concern for the work; and doubtless other influences.

The actual spheres of authority of individual superintendents differed enormously during the late nineteenth century. The definition of duties normally included supervision of teachers and preparation of the course of study, but Philbrick observed that the important issue was not so much the formal definition as it was actual power. Superintendents in Boston and St. Louis, for example, both were to oversee "instruction and school management, but the superintendent of the latter city practically exercises much larger powers than the superintendent of the former. He performs the duties and exercises the powers to a large extent which are assigned in the former, and indeed in most cities, to subcommittees on individual schools or districts." Whereas William T. Harris had de facto power to nominate teachers and transfer them and pupils in St. Louis, those tasks in Boston were in the hands of subcommittees of the board.[98]

Aaron Gove's informal ways of influencing the Denver board of six members gave him influence comparable to that of Harris. Since the board followed the custom of having subcommittees to make decisions on administrative matters, Gove exerted his control not through formal delegation of responsibility but by being a well-informed and trusted adviser to the board and its committees. He did not limit his scope to the course of study and supervision but felt that it was his duty to participate in all "the business affairs of the corporation, whose executive officer" he claimed to be. Towards subordinates he was an absolute authority, but he was content with relatively undefined power with respect to the board -- until in 1904 he crossed swords with a new consolidated board and came to believe that duties and spheres of influence of the superintendent should be clearly specified.[99]

Another commanding figure in school administration -- one who appeared an autocrat to most of his teachers -- was William Maxwell, superintendent of the Brooklyn schools. Maxwell learned to seize power where he could. When in Brooklyn, he became friends with political boss Hugh McLaughlin, and when he needed support for some plan he "went to the Boss on Willoughby St., and if, perchance, the Boss was whittling or absorbed in deep thought, Maxwell adapted himself to circumstances. He studied the whims and foibles of the leaders and played upon their vanity to attain his ends." When he became superintendent of the unified boroughs of New York, he was expressly forbidden under the terms of the charter any "right of interference with the actual conduct of any school in the city of New York," so firm was the resistance to centralization among borough leaders, but there again he learned how to build a bureaucratic power base through influence on appointments and through exploiting the power vacuum created by an ineffectual large board of education.[100]

Men less skilled and forceful than Maxwell often ran afoul of resentful school boards. In 1869 Zalmon Richards was appointed superintendent of the Washington D.C. schools under an ordinance that authorized him "to direct all matters pertaining to the government and course of instruction, books, studies, discipline and conduct of the public schools, and the conditions of schoolhouses and of the schools generally." Immediately an editorial in the Washington Evening Star warned that this "sweeping" grant of power did "away with pretty much all the duties heretofore exercised by the board of trustees," an action that "put aside the experience of so many well-informed men as are now to be found upon the school board." Within a year the trustees censured Richards for invading their prerogatives "by importing from Chicago a set of school registers," by introducing some charts" he had prepared, "by precipitating a collision of authority by issuing to the teachers a mode of annual examination and promotion which has been unanimously rejected by the Board," and by sundry other faults including "errors in spelling common words" which "excited the derision of the pupils." A subcommittee of the board wrote a report attacking Richards and contending that a proper superintendent should be suave and cooperative, one who "should avoid rather than seek responsibility." It was this kind of role definition that Philbrick ridiculed when he described one kind of typical superintendent as a man whose "supreme ambition is to carry on the routine operations of the system with as little friction as possible, and with this end in view he virtually says to his board, 'I am here to obey your instructions. Tell me what to do and I will do it with alacrity and delight.' ... All are highly gratified to be thus assured and are highly content with their amiable and industrious superintendent."[101]

As if troubles with boards were not vexing enough, superintendents sometimes faced insubordination and sabotage within the ranks of the school system, especially in cases where male principals and masters had once enjoyed autonomy. Like board members, such subordinates resented the invasion of their former privileges. Superintendent Seaver of Boston told in 1903 of troubles his predecessor Philbrick faced in putting a uniform course of study into operation. "Schoolmasters are usually great for passive opposition, and perhaps none were ever greater than the Boston schoolmasters of the last generation. Each was a supreme ruler in his own school district, and, relying on the support of his district committee, he could defy the interference of all other authorities, and he often did." Seaver told of a visitor who asked one of the masters of that era if he could see a class in natural science. The master said there were none, and when pressed to explain why -- since science was in the course of study -- replied: "We allow our Superintendent to keep it there for ornamental purposes, but we do not pretend to do anything with it in the schools." A similar situation existed at that time in Los Angeles where the superintendent complained that the schools were "conducted on a sort of guerilla system," meaning that the principals did not want a commander.[102]

Certain political arrangements compounded the troubles of central administrators. In San Francisco, the superintendents were elected every other year -- often from the ranks of principals and on the basis of party affiliation. This political turmoil undermined the informal authority of the superintendent -- his formal authority was practically nil -- although it did lend itself to unusually frank annual reports as a Democratic superintendent criticized the Republican principals for spending too much on repairs, or as Republican Board members talked about poor discipline in schools run by Democratic principals. In Philadelphia the powerful local boards looked upon "suggestions that come from the Central Board as propositions to be opposed on principle," reported Joseph Rice. The support of this central board was of little use to James McAllister when he arrived as the first superintendent in 1883. He did not even visit some of the schools since he knew he would be unwelcome there, and had as "allies only a few of the thirty-odd local boards in the city." He was partially successful, however, in asserting control over the curriculum by writing a new course of study and giving annual examinations based upon it.[103]

6. Lives Routinized Yet Insecure

Teachers sometimes found themselves caught in the middle in contests of authority between superintendents and school boards. As a result, their lives were frequently routinized yet insecure. Routinized because both superintendents and school boards normally shared, so far as I can determine, the same expectation that classrooms should be run with military discipline and that teachers, like pupils, should toe the line.[104] Insecure because it was often not clear who governed, and hence who hired and fired and supervised. The campaign for civil service reforms -- certification retirement funds, and tenure especially -- derived largely from this insecurity of office. The drive for teacher power and "professionalism" arose from a widespread desire of teachers to gain more control over their routinized occupation. In Part Four, I shall examine in more detail these twin goals of civil service reform and "professionalism" as key features of the transformation of the schools during the period from 1890 to 1940. For now I shall focus upon the ambivalent feelings of many teachers in the late nineteenth century toward the issue of how the schools should be governed.

It is very difficult to find out how teachers did feel towards the questions of who should hire, fire, and supervise them, for all too often they left few records -- they were silent women and faceless men. In 1896 the Atlantic Monthly quoted some anonymous teachers in a series of articles designed to "get the schools out of politics." L.H. Jones cited a few of these comments:

> Nearly all the teachers in our schools get their positions by what is called 'political pull.'
>
> Positions are secured and held by the lowest principles of corrupt politicians.
>
> The public schools of this city are partisan political schools.... Politicians wage a war of extermination against all teachers who are not their vassals.

Superintendent Jones then remarked that "it is difficult to decide which is the more startling, the innocent acceptance of the situation by teachers and superintendents, or the depth of cupidity and cold-blooded selfishness manifested by the partisan politicians, and even by members of school boards." To Jones as to many other leading schoolmen of the time, it was clear that the solution lay in civil service reform and meritocracy: school boards should appoint teachers only on recommendation of the superintendent and only on the basis of merit. Philbrick argued that "the principles of a good civil service are essentially the same as the principles of a good educational service. Hence the achievement of the civil service reform will prepare the way for this reform. The spoils system and the annual election [reappointment of teachers] are twin barbarisms and with the abolition of the former the latter must go." Philbrick believed that "the paradise for which the teacher prays" in a job in which "he owes his position to his merit, and not to favor, and to be sure that his efforts will be appreciated and recompensed."[105]

In San Francisco John Swett, principal and superintendent and pioneer of professionalism, fought for decades against the ways the school board appointed teachers. The board divided hiring of new teachers equally among the twelve directors, so that if there were thirty-six to appoint, each board member would have three. The board itself gave an examination to each teacher sufficiently arbitrary that it could pass or fail individuals at will. Swett recalled that fine teachers failed to be reappointed because they forgot "the best route from 'Novgorod to Killimandijaro,' or from 'Red Dog to You Bet.'" The superintendent was never consulted or asked for recommendations. Before 1870 the board threw open all positions annually, so that the Damocles sword of non-reappointment hung over the head of even the most competent teacher. "The doors of the star-chamber were besieged until midnight," Swett wrote about the Board's closed session, "by anxious teachers, waiting to know their fate." In 1870, San Francisco reformers managed to win a new policy of hiring teachers during a "period of competency and good behavior" -- hardly iron-clad tenure, but an improvement over annual election. Throughout the nineteenth century, however, San Francisco teachers won positions mainly by pull with some director. In 1880 the superintendent reported that it was "a well known fact, that the most incompetent teachers bring the most outside pressure to bear on the Directors." When the board wanted more positions to fill, it found useful the new role of "inspecting teacher," for this supervisor could recommend the dismissal of any "inefficient" teacher to the Board's "Committee on Classification." Swett said that "it would be easier to make an 'informer' in Ireland, respected by the mass of the Irish people, than to make a 'head inspector' regarded in any other light than that of a spy and an executioner."[106]

In the 1880's and 1890's, Swett attacked the party machine of Boss Chris Buckley and campaigned for appointment by merit. San Francisco's way of selecting teachers, he wrote, "is the worst in the world. It is purely a system of 'personal patronage.' It is an outgrowth of the 'spoils system' ... contrary to all principles of civil service reform." Under Buckley's control, the board found a way to force Swett to resign: they created a new curriculum for the Girls' High School, of which Swett was principal, forced some of his teachers to resign, and threatened to humiliate him in front of the Committee on Classification. Swett resigned but retaliated by being elected as Superintendent in 1890. Once in office, he had little power and continued to attack the spoils system which, he claimed, was "utterly antagonistic to scholarship and department discipline."[107]

In a number of the wards in Philadelphia, there was no one effective "department discipline" over the teachers. A muck-raking journalist, Adele Marie Shaw, claimed that the teacher in that city "acknowledges three distinct authorities.... She owes allegiance to the local board that appoints her, to the Central Board that confirms the appointment, and to the superintendent and his staff, who supervise the course of study and are supposed to regulate the standard of teaching." There were 553 superiors with overlapping jurisdictions: 504 local board members in 42 wards, 42 central board members, and the superintendent and his six assistants. "The salvation of the teacher is in choosing the most powerful master and in appearing, as far as possible, to serve all three." In fact the dominant master was usually the local board, since most local bosses showed "an ignorant and suspicious disregard of the superintendent" and since the central board had little real power. "The local board," she claimed, "is the old village school board clinging to an authority whose excuse has vanished." Many of the ward committees were stepping stones for politicians and part of a large patronage apparatus. For decades it had been common for teachers to pay committeemen for positions. One new teacher brought fifty dollars to a reform woman director. The new employee was bewildered when her sponsor refused the tribute: "I was told it was cutomary to pay some one," she blurted out.[108]

The ward boss normally gave final approval to nominations. He had his own network of information about the schools in which janitors were often the key spies. In one school, Shaw "heard a janitor summon the principal with a peremptory 'Come here!' If there had been no visitor present, I was told, it was quite likely he would have called her by her first name." In another school, the janitor asked a substitute teacher what she could do to get votes for the "organization." When she replied "nothing," he answered: "You ain't the kind we want here ...." Some insiders told Shaw that "A teacher is not an individual, but an insignificant part of a political 'organization,' it is her business not to think, but to mind."[109]

In December, 1904, after some school directors were indicted for graft, a group of administrators and teachers mounted an attack on the patronage system, fearful that "they were taking their educational lives in their hands." Shaw observed the previous February that "there is a Siberia, both cold and hungry, for subordinates who criticize the management of the Philadelphia public schools." Fifty principals and a number of high school teachers -- people of higher and more independent status than the elementary school teachers -- issued a statement to the press that asserted that the system was so chaotic and conditions in classrooms so deplorable that a total reorganization was imperative. The principals' example gave courage to the Board of Managers of the Teachers' Association, which endorsed the idea a new structure of government for the schools. "The vice of the Philadelphia system," said the President of the Teachers' Association, "is ... that while we have grown into a great city, we have maintained a village organization." The Council of Representatives of the Teachers' Association, however, refused to submit a referendum to the membership on the reform proposals, although the Council did vote its own support for a commission to investigate the matter. Thus we know how leaders among the teachers felt, but not the views of the rank and file. It is possible that a majority of teachers were grateful to the political machine for their positions. Ethnic, religious, or neighborhood loyalties may have attached them to the ward boards and they may have feared losing their jobs or status as a result of greater professional control. Some combination of motives such as these may have wedded some of them to the existing systems, but if so the evidence is hard to find. In Pittsburg the Teachers Association of more than 600 members took an active role in reforms designed to centralize control of the schools and turn them over to experts.[110]

In the heated campaign to abolish the ward boards in New York City in 1896, teachers did express their views openly and vociferously -- and almost entirely against destroying the powers of the local committees. All of the teacher organizations fought the state legislative act that removed powers to hire and supervise teachers from the local committees and transfered these functions to a centralized board with its staff of superintendents.

Teachers collected 100,000 signatures on petitions, attended mass meetings, and wrote protest letters to Mayor William Strong.[111] Almost 4000 teachers gathered at one meeting to hear Matthew Elgas, President of the New York Teachers' Association, denounce centralization. Elgas believed that centralization might "prove the beginning of disaster to our beloved schools," for decentralized lay authority had been the chief means of humanizing and democratizing the vast system. "It is unfair and dangerous to concentrate so much labor, power and responsibility in the person and office of the Superintendents and thereby make them a kind of educational Pooh-Bah." Far wiser was it to retain the powers of the ward trustees to hire and supervise teachers, to recommend promotions and replacements, to mediate in special decisions about religious observances or curriculum between the community and the central board, and to stimulate local interest in the common schools. Another educator praised the "representative character of the Trustees ... which furnished an Irish Trustee to represent the Irishmen, a German Trustee to represent the Germans, and a Hebrew Trustee to represent the Hebrews."[112]

Supporters of centralization argued that teachers defended the ward system from fear of losing their jobs if they offended Tammany politicians or from a more efficient system of supervision would mean more work for them. There may have been some substance in these charges -- after all, teachers did owe their jobs to the trustees and had learned how to work well with them -- for it is natural to resist a sharp change in the power structure. But the teachers' testimony both in public meetings and in private letters to the Mayor hardly sounded coerced or insincere. Again and again the teachers argued that the ward trustees were respectable, hard-working, honest people with a strong interest in the children of the neighborhood. "The trustees are gentlemen," said a woman who had taught in four quite different wards in the city, "and devote every spare minute and even sleeping time to the care of the schools. The present attempt to abolish the trustees is all wrong and has not been brought about by those who know our Public Schools." Speaking as the representative of the Male Assistant Teachers Association, a principal asserted that because of the trustees' "interest _in_ the children, they are necessary _to_ the children." As an example, he cited his experience in the crowded tenth ward, where the schools enrolled children who were almost all "of Russian and Polish parentage, whose lives are lives of toil and privation." Practically every day, he said, "one or the other of the Trustees was ... a visitor to the school in the interest of the children. It needed not the advent of the philanthropist to maintain the welfare of the children in their school lives." The result was a harmonious relationship in which "Trustees were known to the parents in this community: the children knew them as their friends." The local "peculiar population had its representative on the local Board." In his present prosperous ward on Morningside Heights, the principal added, the trustees took the same active interest: "Their visits are frequent, and the very tots seem to know that _their_ comfort and welfare is the object of these visits," as when trustees came one bitterly cold morning to make sure that the building was warm enough.[113]

To publicize their demand for a centralized school system, reformers had charged that education in the city was inefficient and honeycombed with corruption and partisan politics. Thinly veiled was an anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant animus that implied or asserted that things would not be well in the schools until a better class of teachers was employed. One opponent of the ward boards asserted that the new plan would "take the schools out of politics, and that is of far more importance than the alleged objection 'that it takes them out of touch with the plain people.'" The fact was that the "plain people" of New York were mostly foreign and therefore incompetent to manage their affairs properly. The only way to deal with such neighborhoods was to "demand that the children of such a population be brought under American influences and instruction, even if we have to go to the farthest confines of the state to find them." During the debate in the New York legislature, a Senator declared that the schools must put children of the slums "under the influence of educated, refined, intelligent men and women, so they will be elevated and lifted out of the swamp into which they were born and brought up." When one considers that over half of the teachers were probably either first or second generation immigrants, many of them Catholics from humble backgrounds, such opinions could hardly have been winning.* Class snobbery was bad enough; but when it was fortified by religious and ethnic bigotry, the reformers' claims of superiority became a call to battle.[114]

Overwhelmingly, the teachers resented the centralizers' condescension and feared what might happen to themselves if the reformers appointed their "experts" as superintendents and their "refined" ladies as inspectors. Some of the reasons for their nearly universal hostility appear in a handbill called "SCHOOL REFORM" that was handed out to principals and teachers. They claimed that the inspectors might make arbitrary requirements like forcing them to wear uniforms, or that they would not understand the teachers' perspectives. Centralizers claim only to be creating "a simple and business-like administration" of the schools, but this amounts to an assumption of power, based on anti-democratic theories: "the Fact that stares the people in the face is the establishment of an Educational Bureaucracy."[115]

In New York, at least, where teachers had achieved a fairly stable tenure system by 1885 and thus did not face the insecurity of annual reelection, they saw few benefits and many dangers in giving up the powers of the local ward committees and substituting a centralized board with its superintendents. It is likely that in many other communities teachers feared the "educational Pooh-Bah" quite as much as the party machine and suspected that new standards of selection, retention, and supervision might render their status more precarious, not less, especially if standards were set by persons of narrow WASP sympathies.[116]

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*In 1908 in a very thorough study of ethnicity in New York Schools, the Immigration Commission discovered that 71 percent of the pupils had foreign-born fathers; 47.2 percent of teachers had foreign-born fathers, and 7.9 percent were themselves born abroad. Of the 7,029 teachers who were children of immigrants, 2,297 had Irish parents; 1,194 German parents. It seems likely that a dozen years earlier the percentage of immigrants' children serving as teachers was not less than 50 percent.

7. Machines: Political and Pedagogical

Many of the teachers in New York looked upon the centralizers and foes of Tammany Hall as a rival operators (in particular, they suspected that the leader of the fight against the ward boards, Nicholas Murray Butler, wanted presitigous positions for the graduates of his institution, Teachers College, Columbia). Much of the talk about patronage, they thought, came from people who wanted their jobs. Many of the teachers and principals, no doubt, owed their positions to New York's Democratic machine, an organization that, from one point of view, operated in stable, predictable ways to provide orderly avenues of advancement for citizens of the city. Indeed, the connection between "machines" and the schools is far more complex than the conspiracy to defraud suggested by reformers like Jones, Shaw, or Butler. Max Weber observed that the boss filled a vacuum of centralized leadership as "a political capitalist entrepreneur who on his own account and at his own risk provides votes." The organization he commanded was "strictly and thoroughly organized from top to bottom, and supported by clubs of extraordinary stability." William Vare, for decades a boss of Philadelphia's Republican machine, argued that "our present day development makes organization as necessary for public affairs as it is for industry, for labor and for society generally."

Although the inspiration and composition of the organizations were quite different, school bureaucracies and political machines had certain features in common and represented somewhat similar responses to the splintering of decision-making in the city: both sought to answer the question, "Who's in charge?" From voluntary groupings like saloons, astute politicians moved to complex chains of command. Daniel Moynihan points out that in Tammany the Irish began with ward committees to establish "a vast hierarchy of party positions descending from the county leader at the top down to the block captain and beyond, even to building captains. Each position had rights and responsibilities that had to be observed. The result was a massive party bureaucracy." In contrast with the flux and unpredictability and counterbalances of the visible government of elected offices, the machine was often stable over long periods of time -- Hugh McLaughlin bossed the Brooklyn Democracy from 1862 to 1903, for example -- and accountable to those who paid for votes and influence.[117]

In addition to providing centralized decision-making for those who bought the organization's services, the machine often performed latent functions of considerable importance in the polyglot, mushrooming cities. It often provided relief for the poor -- shelter when floods hit the river wards, Thanksgiving turkeys, hods of coal on biting February days -- and information and influence for newcomers unfamiliar with the red tape and overlapping jurisdictions of city agencies. Through jobs and contracts it offered paths of social mobility to ethnic groups that otherwise might have been excluded from the public sector. The ward organizations often gave residents a feeling of being recognized and appreciated. And amid the rivalries of ethnic groups, the abrasion acculturation to strange urban and American ways, often the machine lubricated the points of greatest social friction. Sensitive to the dangers of alienating voters by denigrating their religion or their folkways -- for that might cost votes -- machine politicians sought peace among their pluralistic supporters. William Vare was appalled, for example, when the organization candidate in Philadelphia "likened the downtown district to 'the slums of Moscow,'" for that cost the election. Boss Tweed's school committees let teachers omit Protestant rituals in predominantly Catholic neighborhoods. At the same that machine helped to blunt ethnic or religious conflicts, they also helped to integrate newcomers into the public life of the marketplace and political arena. Although WASP reformers often portrayed the public school system and the political machine as a polar opposited, in different ways each sought to centralize and stabilize public decision-making, each acculturated immigrants politically and economically, each provided disciplined bureaucratic hierarchies.[118]

But the charges of "machine politics" and "corruption" should not simply be dismissed as code words for anti-immigrant or anti-Catholic feeling -- though they often signified that, too. Graft siphoned off funds sorely needed to build schools, provide books, and pay teachers. The opportunities for corruption in public education were enormous, as local or central boards assigned contracts for land, construction of buildings, repairs or equipment; bought textbooks, supplies, and similar consumables; and appointed the hundreds of thousands of teachers, janitors, administrators, and other salaried officers. In the graft-ridden and yet penny-pinching schools, Philadelphia Adele Shaw found plaster sagging over the head of children, "the teacher constantly on the alert to warn them if it fell." There teachers had to buy supplies from their paltry salaries, and the principal had to drop a dime in the school's telephone before it would operate. Furious at the corruption in Detroit that robbed the children of the city, Mayor Hazen Pingree walked into the school board meeting on August 15, 1894, and declared "there are quite a number of the members of this board who are going to jail tonight." When committeemen refused to resign, Pingree called off their names and the police hauled them away.[119]

Textbook scandals rocked the country as huge firms collided in conflict over the vast school market. A teacher claimed that "the majority of superintendents in small cities owe their positions to "pulls" organized by publishing houses to whose books they are friendly." Muckrakers like Upton Sinclair and Lincoln Steffens reported cases of bribery and collusion between textbook promoters, school board members, and schoolmen. Textbook salesmen were not above using alluring women as accomplices to blackmail school officials into favoring their wares.[120]

But not all swindling of the public and the children took covert forms, nor was graft the monopoly of political machines or school-related businesses. Large corporations and taxpayers "legally" bilked public schools. The Chicago schools consistently failed to receive just rentals from prestigious tenants on its school lands. In 1895, for example, the Chicago Tribune won a ninety-nine year lease for its property for $30,000 while a neighboring building on half the land paid $60,000. By strange coincidence the chairman of the board of education at the time and member of the committee on school fund property was the attorney for the Tribune. Public utilities in that city evaded taxes on their franchises with the connivance of county and state assessors. Sanctified by law or not, such cheating of the public was hardly the monopoly of machines dominated by inner-city ethnic groups.

8. Symbolic Issues

Often at stake in the pluralistic politics of urban education were issues that were more symbolic than economic. Many citizens who sought to influence school policies were not interested in jobs or contracts or favorable tax assessments but rather in an imposition of their values on others or in freedom to affirm their sub-culture in their own schools.

Certain symbolic questions dramatized and reinforced the life-style of a native-born Protestant group that once had been dominant in village America but that saw its power and influence slipping away in the cities. Temperance was one such question, and state after state passed laws requiring public schools to teach the evils of liquor until by 1901 all states had some form of "temperance" instruction. The place of religion in public education was another. Perceiving a decline of their authority and an increase in sin and disorder, Protestants waged a vigorous campaign to inculcate their morality in a society becoming increasingly pluralistic. The very people who made the WASPS nervous about the state of the nation -- Catholic and Jewish immigrants in particular and urban "politicians" in general -- were leading an attack on religion in the public schools. Again and again in meetings at the NEA,leaders accused Catholics at a conspiracy to defraud children of religious instruction, aided in its dirty work by "the foreign element, uninstructed in American civilization." No moral education which dispenses with the "All-Seeing Eye" could accomplish its control purpose: inculcating the life-style of the Protestant middle-class. A lobby for Bible reading based in Chicago attacked their opponents as un-American despots and draped the Bible in the flag at its exhibit at the 1893 World's Fair in that city.[122] In Our Country the evangelical minister Josiah Strong joined the battle in 1885, claiming that lack of religion in the common school was one of the curses of the "rabble-ruled" cities.

In 1876 and again in 1888, Republicans tried to pass constitutional amendments forbidding public funds to "sectarian" schools while still permitting the reading of the Bible. In the latter year, Senator Blair introduced a measure requiring the teaching of "the principles of the Christian religion." One of his supporters argued at a hearing on the resolution that he was not there "to say anything about the Roman Catholic religion .... But there are certain facts that affect our school system, and it is these facts that we came here to present. Whatever else may be said of the religion of the Roman Catholics, it has its grip on the throats of our cities."[123]

In 1888 some Protestants in Boston were outraged when the school board voted to remove an anti-Catholic textbook and to censure a teacher accused of making bigoted remarks. Accustomed to thinking of themselves as a majority and their views as the accepted consensus, they did not consider themselves as "political" but as crusaders for an obvious good: "one indisputable reason for [placing] women on the school committee." one of them wrote, "is the necessity of keeping our schools out of politics." Ultra Protestant groups vowed not only to remove all Catholic committeemen but also to eliminate all others who had voted with them in the textbook case. Swelled by a ten-fold increase in registered women voters, a large group of Protestant women formed a bloc-vote in response to the challenge that "no true woman will remain inactive when her religious convictions are jeopardized." Smelling victory in feminist anti-Catholicism, the city Republicans nominated only school board candidates approved by the Protestant women. They won.[124]

Similar battles erupted across the nation, the most notable of which was the Cincinnati Bible case in 1869. Paul Kleppner has observed that to the Pietist mind the public schools "were not mere educative agencies, but were designed to perpetuate a particular value-system and to inculcate those values in a rising generation. The attack on Bible reading threatened their capacity to fulfill that role."[125]

Bi-lingualism and bi-culturalism aroused feelings comparable to religion in the public schools. Here, nativists and immigrants clashed head-on in urban school politics. To many immigrants it was vital to assert the value of their culture by teaching their language to their children -- after all, they paid taxes and deserved a say in the curriculum. Especially during the anti-foreign hysteria, induced by movements such as the Know-Nothings, the American Protective Association, and the anti-immigrant feeling of World War I, nativists demanded that the schools Americanize the children of immigrants by teaching only in English.[126]

The Germans in Cincinnati were among the first to organize politically to insert their language into elementary classrooms. German residents of Cincinnati had repeatedly and unsuccessfully requested the local school board to consolidate their private schools with the German schools. In 1840, German citizenry persuaded the Ohio legislature to pass a law requiring school boards to teach German whenever "seventy-five freeholders" demanded it in writing. The resulting schools were bilingual: at first children learned reading, grammar and spelling in both English and German in the primary grades, moving on to instruction in English, in arithmetic, geography and other subjects. In 1841 "fifty prominent German citizens" persuaded the board to organize two divisions: "The elementary class, in which German and English were taught orally as well as with the use of books, and the advanced class, which was to receive instruction in English one day, and the next day in German." The election of German residents to the board advanced their cause, despite the hostility aroused by Know-Nothing agitation. In 1853, German children residing in districts where there were no special provisions for them were permitted to transfer to German schools. That year the president of the board, Rufus King, observed that the Germans "may well appeal to us to preserve between them that link without which all family and social ties are lost." By 1899 there were 17,584 pupils studying German in Cincinnati; 14,248 of them in the primary grades; in the first four grades they split their school week evenly between a German teacher and an English teacher. Thus bilingual classes not only helped immigrant parents to preserve their culture but also gave positions to 186 German-speaking teachers.[127]

In St. Louis, Germans persuaded the school board to introduce their language into elementary schools in 1864. With their increasing numbers and wealth they were an effective political pressure group, for a German boycott of public schools would have seriously weakened the system. At first the board expected that only German children would enroll in these classes; they were permitted to transfer to other schools if their own district did not provide German instruction. In 1871-72, however, the board rescinded its ban on Anglo-American pupils in the first three grades and the enrollment in the German classes rose 95 percent in three years to 15,769. For the most part, German was a separate subject rather than the language of instruction in the curriculum as a whole. In 1875 William T. Harris, then St. Louis superintendent, staunchly defended the teaching of the language in elementary school, by including the German minority that felt excluded, he said, the entire public system became more useful and more stable. "to eradicate caste distinctions in the community is, perhaps, the most important function of the public school system .... Our own system has introduced German into all the schools, so that there shall be a mingling of all nationalities in each school, and all caste distinctions vanish more rapidly." Harris deplored "clannishness and the odious feeling of 'nativism'" and saw no conflict between the Germans' desire to retain their "family ties with the old stock" and their determination that their children be "thoroughly versed in the language and customs of the country in which they are to live." "National memories and aspirations, family traditions, customs, and habits, moral and religious observances -- all these form what may be called the *substance* of the character of each individual," said Harris, "and they can not be suddenly removed or changed without disastrously weakening the personality." Later leaders not so cosmopolitan or tolerant as Harris, however, abolished the teaching of German in elementary schools in 1888.[128]

That year the Missouri state superintendent of schools complained that German settlers in many districts so ruled the schools that "the schools are mainly taught in the German language." Between 1854 and 1877, under largely German leadership, eight states in the midwest and the plains passed laws enabling local school boards or even "freeholders" representing twenty-five or fifty pupils to require instruction in foreign languages in the common school. By 1900, 231,700 children were studying German in elementary school. That year 34,232 out of a total enrollment of 40,225 in the four upper elementary grades and the high schools in Chicago were taking German, slightly under half of them of German parentage. The Chicago supervisor of modern languages quoted Charles Eliot's warning that to discontinue "German instruction in the public schools would be followed by very serious and most unpleasant consequences, to be sure, since the Germans, being now strong supporters and friends of these schools, are numerous, and since they, under all circumstances, will resolutely hold to their mother tongue."[129]

Among the various immigrant groups seeking symbolic affirmation of their worth, Germans had high status and political clout. As they became increasingly assimilated into the dominant culture, they shifted their demands from bilingual schools -- which they had achieved in Cincinnati, Baltimore, and Indianapolis -- to a justification of German as an elective and separate subject for the upper elementary grades and the high schools. The change became explicit when a spokesman for the Nationalbund in 1901 declared that English should be the official language of instruction, that only foreign languages of cultural or commercial importance should be taught (foremost among them German, of course), and that "No foreign language should be taught in the American public schools simply because the pupils and patrons of the schools speak the foreign languages in question. If this principle will not be recognized, we will not only have German schools but *Hungarian*, *Polish*, and *Italian ones as well*.[130]

Indeed, although German or Anglophile cultural imperialists might decry it, that is precisely what happened wherever immigrants were able to use ethnic power to their advantage. Polish, Italian, Czech, Norwegian, French, Spanish, Dutch, and other languages were introduced into public elementary schools (though usually not as the language of instruction but as a separate subject). In 1915 in Milwaukee, 30,368 children studied German in elementary schools, 3,102 Polish, and 811 Italian (the latter two subjects concentrated in a few schools in the immigrant neighborhoods). In 1865 San Francisco opened its first "cosmopolitan school," which taught children in French, German and English. By 1875 the deputy superintendent argued that "if the parents of San Francisco were prepared to examine into the merits of the question of imparting instruction in the French and German languages, without partisan bias or dread of political consequences, I am satisfied that they would come to the conclusion that I have, i.e. that except for the children of French and German parents, who use their languages in their homes, the instruction, as at present given, is not only useless but absolutely pernicious." The superintendent that year urged that students "be required to study and recite their lessons in geography, arithmetic, etc., in the foreign language which they wish to learn," admitting that such a practice might drive away the non-immigrant children. As late as 1917, largely because of the political demands of foreign-speaking citizens, San Francisco still had four elementary schools in which children studies French, German in eight, Italian in six, and Spanish in two.[131]

Instruction of young pupils in foreign languages aroused much opposition, both among nativists and among ethnic groups that felt excluded. In the late 1880's there was a concerted drive in cities and states to eliminate or curb foreign languages in elementary schools. Professing a variety of motives -- economy, the need to Americanize, and others -- Louisville, St. Louis, St. Paul and other cities dropped German. The Edwards Law in Illinois (1889) and the Bennett bill in Wisconsin (1889) tried to regulate immigrant private and parochial schools by requiring that most instruction be conducted in English. As in the case of Protestant rituals in the schools, the contest over instruction in languages other than English became a symbolic battle between those who wanted to impose one standard of belief and those who welcomed pluralistic forms of education.[132]

Amid the pluralistic politics of interest groups, the symbolic conflicts of Catholic and Protestant, immigrant and nativist, black and white, the position of schoolmen was an anomalous one. For the most part, they held a common set of WASP values, professed a common-core (i.e. pan-Protestant) Christianity, were ethnocentric, and tended to glorify the sturdy virtues of a departed rural tradition. At the same time, they normally shared Horace Mann's dislike for partisan controversy in either politics or religion; the common school, after all, should rest on consensus. The battles of interest groups to influence the schools simply disrupted that consensus and interfered with the task of building the one best system.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, schoolmen were caught between their vision of an "ideal standard" of school organization and the actual configurations of school politics. Even those who had served long and devotedly were often unceremoniously fired. For most the job was a brief way-station; the average tenure of office in Los Angeles and San Francisco was two year; Omaha, Buffalo, Rochester, and Milwaukee, 3; Cincinnati and Indianapolis 5. But some stayed for long terms like Gove and Philbrick to construct, piece by piece bureaucratic foundations on which others would build.[133]

Would the future be different? The writings of schoolmen at the turn of the century bristled with apprehension and hope. They knew what was wrong: "the multiplication of troublesome classes and the greater influence of patronage upon political organizations and elections"; large and meddlesome boards of education; insecure and sometimes powerless status for the men who should lead; class conflict, poverty, crime, and all the other ills that the school was designed to solve. When they talked about solutions, characteristically they saw them in the form of better organization. Writing about "The Trail of the City Superintendent" Aaron Gove said in 1900 that "Without question the greatest problem today is how best to administer the public-school interests of a city .... The history of the last two years or more leaves no doubt of the interest and even anxiety of the American community as to the direction of public schools. From our great metropolis down thru the secondary cities is found an agitation, an unrest, as to the conduct of this quasi-public corporation." Properly administering "this quasi-public corporation" -- he was talking about the future of the public schools of New York, Chicago, Detroit. The village school had now become urban and almost a system. A new type of expert, backed by a centralized board and an efficient staff -- that might be the answer. Such a plan might weaken the influence of "troublesome classes" which had so disrupted the search for system.[134]

9. A Struggle Lonely and Unequal

Amid the schoolmen's quest for a one best system and the politics of pluralism the history of black urban education posed a strange anomaly. While publicists glorified the unifying influence of common learning under the common roof of the common school, black Americans were rarely part of that design. While groups like the Germans won expensive concessions like special language classes, blacks had to fight for crumbs. While schoolmen tried to erase the pauper taint from free schooling for whites, education of Negroes often seemed to be an act of charity, an occasion for self-congratulation of benevolent men. In schools that supposedly banned the lines of caste, black children became subjects of experiments in "classification" that had portents for the future.

During the nineteenth century no group in the United States had a greater faith in the equalizing power of schooling or a clearer understanding of the democratic promise of public education than did black Americans. "It is the humanizing, socializing influence of the school system, which is its most important feature," stated a group of Boston Negroes in 1846 in a petition for desegregated schools. Practically every black voluntary group, almost all black politicians, rated the improvement of educational opportunities near the top of priorities for their people Yet across the nation many of the whites who controlled systems of public education excluded, segregated, or cheated black pupils. Negroes learned that the educational system that was to homogenize other Americans was not meant for them. As in other spheres of their lives, they learned that constantly they had to fight for rights that were supposedly guaranteed to them by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and by democratic principles.[135]

Strategies and tactics differed from community to community, depending in part on the nature of black leadership and the degree of white prejudice. In some cities blacks argued for separate but equal schools, maintaining that such systems offered opportunities for Negroes to obtain good jobs and claiming that black children in mixed schools suffered from the insults of white children and the cruelty and bias of white teachers. In 1876 a black magazine declared that white teachers in black schools "take no real interest in their work nor in the scholars but teach and tolerate them only in order to ... draw their money .... We are tired of white overseers ...." In other communities activists pressed for integrated schools, arguing that separate schools were inherently unequal. In integrated schools, Frederick Douglass said in 1872, black and white children "will learn to know each other better, and be better able to cooperate for mutual benefit." Lacking real political power, Negroes used some of the tactics available to oppressed minorities: court cases, boycotts, sit-ins, petitions, and lobbies.[136]

As Carter G. Woodson documented long ago, free blacks before the Civil War zealously sought education and invested much income and effort in establishing their own voluntary schools (often aided by white philanthropists and religious organizations). From first-hand knowledge and interviews of black citizens, in 1868 M.B. Goodwin wrote a history of educational opportunities for Negroes in antebellum Washington, D.C., telling of a large array of schools associated with churches, both black and white, private "seminaries" for middle-class blacks, and dozens of primary schools ranging in size from a handful of pupils to over one hundred. In a number of institutions white and black students studied side by side although there were no public schools for Negroes. He concluded that as many free blacks attended school before the Civil War in proportion to the population as did after emancipation. That this zeal for learning galled lower class whites became clear during a riot in 1835, when shipyard workers raged through black classrooms, demolishing furniture, breaking windows, and burning schools to the ground. In other cities, such as Boston, New York, and St. Louis, white philanthropists joined black leaders in founding private schools for Negro children.[137]

Before the Civil War, whites in northern cities often regarded public schools for blacks not as a right but as a gesture of "benevolence" -- and usually a parsimonious one at that. In 1847 the New York state legislature appropriated a fund from which the trustees of incorporated villages could draw funds for separate public schools for black pupils. Although there were an estimated 11,000 Negro children in the state, the municipalities requested only $396 in 1849. These "colored schools" were independent of the regular school system, administered by the village trustees rather than by school committees; the state superintendent of common schools suspected that funds intended for black children went instead to the white public schools. In Sacramento, California, members of the City Council protested that if they opened public schools to blacks, "why not open wide the doors of our generosity, and provide for the education of Kanakas, Chinese, and Diggers?"[138]

The major arguments that would dominate discussion of desegregation of public schools for the next century were already apparent in Boston in the 1840's. In the early nineteenth century black children were permitted to attend the Boston public schools, but few enrolled. Instead, black parents claimed that their children could gain a better education in separate schools where they would not be exposed to white prejudice, and with the aid of some wealthy whites they established their own institutions. The City gradually took over the supervision and financing of these black schools. As Stanley Schultz observes, a number of Boston Negroes changed their mind by the late 1820's and 1830's, however; they began to suspect that the only way to gain equality in education was through desegregation. The eloquent black abolitionist, David Walker, expressed a growing suspicion that whites were conspiring to keep black children ignorant, to keep them from the advanced knowledge that they needed for their liberation. If there were white children in the classes -- in effect, as hostages -- the teachers would have to teach the Negro pupils as well. At the same time that Walker called for militant action, a future black leader of a school boycott, William Nell, received honors at his school examination but failed to be invited to the mayor's dinner for the white scholars. Slipping in to the celebration as a waiter, he met a school examiner who whispered "You ought to be here with the other boys." Nell agreed, and later attacked a power structure whose benevolence he distrusted.[139]

The drive for mixed schools split the Boston black community. A determined group of militant desegregationists petitioned the school board and the primary school committee. When that failed, they boycotted the Smith Grammar School and set up a substitute "temporary school." Enrollment dropped from over 100 in 1844 to 53 in 1849. Finally they took their cause to court. Another group of black citizens wanted to retain the segregated schools but to improve buildings and facilities and to hire a black master to replace the white teacher, who had been accused of cruelty and lack of faith in the intellectual capacity of his students.[140]

Petitions to the school committees fell mostly on deaf ears. The white committeemen said that segregated black schools in Philadelphia, New York, Providence, Nantucket, and Worcester expressed the genuine desire of the Negro communities in those cities and claimed that "outsiders" -- meaning white abolitionists -- had stirred up Boston black citizens who otherwise would have been content. A "petition of Sundry Colored Persons" had maintained that separate schools were inherently unequal "since all experience teaches that where a small and despised class are shut out from the common benefit of any public institutions of learning and confined to separate schools, few or none interest themselves about the schools -- neglect ensues, abuses creep in, the standard of scholarship degenerates, and the teachers and the scholars are soon considered and of course become an inferior class." That was tantamount, said the white primary school committee, to believing that "colored people contaminate colored people by being together." Instead, the committee urged Negroes to "cultivate a respect for themselves, for their own race, their own blood, aye, and for their own color." Black might be beautiful, but black children didn't belong in school with whites, said the school committee, for there was an ineffaceable distinction "in the physical, mental, and moral natures of the two races." For both races "Amalgamation is degradation." Besides, whites would "vex and insult the colored children." Since "the prejudices of color are strongest among the most ignorant," the lower classes -- notably the Irish -- would be likely to leave mixed schools altogether. Because prejudice was thus associated with ignorance, obviously the committee did not want to appear bigoted: it was segregating the black children for their own good, using the discretionary powers of classification granted them by law.[141]

Such discretionary powers came into direct conflict with "equality before the law," thought abolitionist Charles Sumner, who used that phrase in a legal brief for the first time in the Roberts' case. Using a full panoply of arguments for integration, Sumner claimed that his black client, Sarah Roberts, had every right, legal and moral, to attend the white school she passed by on her way to the colored school. In a case that served as precedent for the doctrine of "separate but equal" that persisted for more than a century, Judge Lemuel Shaw decided in 1850 that the school committee had the right under its "powers of general superintendence" to classify black children as they did. After failing to win desegregation by boycott, petition, and legal action, Boston's black activists finally succeeded when a Know-Nothing state legislature passed a law in 1855 forbidding distinction "on account of the race, color, or religious opinions, of the applicant or scholar." Despite dire predictions of trouble, white and black children mingled peacefully in schools and in the numbers of Negroes enrolled increased substantially.[142]

The Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation, and even the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments failed to clarify the educational rights of black children in many northern cities. It was left to state and local politics to decide "the Negro question." For a brief time during the late 1860's and early 1870's black citizens could form a powerful alliance with Radical Republicans in some cities to win educational equality; but during most of the latter half of the century they fought, mostly alone or with a few white allies, as they had in Boston using moral suasion, lobbies, boycotts, and court action as the means of moving a reluctant majority.[143]

The legal context of the struggle was contorted and varied state to state. In California, for example, the legislature in 1860 forbade granting state money to any mixed school; in 1870 it passed a law stating that a board of education must set up a school for Afro-American or Indian children if parents of ten children made written application, but such a school must be separate from the white schools. This law made explicit what was often elsewhere implicit, namely that the burden of proof and effort was on blacks to obtain educational justice. In 1874 the California court affirmed that separate but equal schools for Negroes did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment. But San Francisco abandoned its segregated black schools in 1875, largely because the separate schools were costly and unpopular with the Negro community.[144]

In Illinois local officials often found ways to segregate black children even though some laws and court decisions forbade discrimination. A month after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, in February, 1863, the Democratic city council of Chicago passed a "Black School Law" requiring Negro children to attend a segregated school. Black parents rebelled and sent their children to white schools where teachers "refused to acknowledge their presence." When the school board voted that pupils with one-eighth or less of African ancestry could attend white schools, parents used that device to open school doors. Insulted by the absurdity of determining degrees of blackness, Negro leaders "invaded the offices of the Board of Education and the Mayor" to press for repeal of the law. In 1865, Republicans passed a new city charter which abolished segregation. The state constitution of 1870 required free schools open to all and statutes in 1874 and 1889 prohibited discrimination by school officials, but Republican state superintendent Newton Bateman, who had campaigned for adequate education for black children, claimed that desegregation was "one of those matters which involve no principle worth striving about," surely no violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. In 1874 blacks attended separate schools in 26 counties, and in cities like Quincy, Cairo, Alton, and East St. Louis school boards segregated black children. The legal process of obtaining desegregation took so long, and aroused such antagonism in the local community, as Negro Scott Bibb discovered in Alton, that it was a determined and courageous black person who dared to go against the prejudices of white neighbors.[145]

In Indiana black citizens had mixed feelings about desegregation. The Negro community in Indianapolis made great sacrifices to provide private schools for their children in the 1860's before the city opened public education to them. The superintendent of public schools wrote admiringly in 1866 of the large number of black people attending private schools "conducted and supported by themselves, and to a very limited extent, if at all, dependent on the charities of the public .... Their schools are maintained under great disadvantages -- without the generous sympathy of the public generally, with very moderate funds, with buildings unsuited to school purpose, with limited or no school apparatus, with uncomfortable school furniture, with insufficient textbooks, without classification, and with teachers unskilled in the art of imparting instruction." In the name of "humanity, justice, and sound public policy," he urged, they should "receive the benefits of our common school system." The next year the city offered an old school building to blacks, who ran it as a tuition school; Negroes old and young crowded this and other schools to learn to read and write, hungry for the knowledge that had been denied them by law when they had been slaves in the South. In 1867 the superintendent and school board of Indianapolis, together with the Indiana State Teachers Association, appealed to the legislature for funds for separate schools for Negroes. Despite opposition from legislators who argued that Indiana would be overrun by blacks seeking an education, the state passed a law requiring school boards to set up separate schools where they were a sufficient number, or to provide other means of education (including what we would now call vouchers) where the population was too small for a segregated school. In 1874 a black father tested the constitutionality of refusing to admit his children and grandchildren to the white school -- there was no Negro school in his township -- and was told by the Indiana Supreme Court that the Fourteenth Amendment did not limit the power of a state to classify students according to race. In 1877 the state assembly fudged the question by saying that separate schools were still legal, but that black children in communities without Jim Crow schools "shall be allowed to attend the public schools with white children." After that law, Indianapolis retained "colored schools" but also allowed black pupils to attend white schools.[146]

From the beginning of the black public schools in Indianapolis, the Negro community insisted on having black teachers. In 1902, out of a total of 585 teachers employed in elementary schools, 53 were black, all assigned to the "colored schools." In 1897 a Negro member of the general assembly introduced a bill to abolish all discrimination on grounds of race, but thirty teachers from Indianapolis signed a petition opposing the measure, arguing that "If such a Bill becomes a Law, we believe that it will be detrimental to the colored people of the State; that it will deprive not only ourselves but many colored men and women of their livelihood; and that it will remove the opportunity that colored men and women now have to strive after and obtain honorable employment in our public schools." In Washington, D.C. a large number of black teachers shared the same fear should schools be integrated in that city.[147]

That this worry about jobs was not an idle concern is indicated by the experience of New York City: for twenty-two years after mandatory segregation was discontinued in 1873, no black teachers were hired in that school system. Indeed, when the Immigration Commission reported on the number of Negro teachers in thirty cities in 1908, it became apparent that with one or two exceptions the only systems to hire substantial numbers of black teachers were segregated either de jure or deliberately without sanction of law. The following chart of those cities in the sample with more than 1,000 black students indicates that black teachers had a much better chance of being employed in separate schools (segregated systems are marked with an asterisk): (See table on page 83).

It was the racism of the larger society that restricted teaching opportunities for blacks largely to segregated schools, and on a number of occasions Negro leaders argued that blacks should be hired for white or mixed schools without discrimination. Indeed, when white segregationists sometimes offered the bribe of teaching positions for Negroes if a previously desegregated system were to become segregated, black communities often rejected the proposal. Because the job ceiling in white institutions and the poverty of black communities severely restricted careers for the black middle class, teaching had great prestige and frequently attracted highly educated men and women. In Washington, D.C. there were about ten applicants for each vacancy in the black school system as a whole, and positions in the high school

City	Number of Black Teachers in Elementary Grades and Kindergarten	Number of Black Pupils
Baltimore*	285	8,014
Boston	3	1,456
Chicago	16	3,806
Cincinnati	12	2,085
Kansas City*	55	2,351
Los Angeles	0	1,059
Newark	8	1,193
New Orleans*	73	5,028
New York	43	6,542
Philadelphia*	99	7,284
Pittsburg	0	2,792
St. Louis*	136	4,057

attracted the Negro intelligentia. In a number of northern cities special normal schools were established to prepare black teachers, and a substantial number of Negro graduates of leading northern universities found careers in black high schools. Both in elementary and secondary classrooms, these black teachers served as important role models for their students, visible proof that in education, at least, there could be a ladder of success for the ambitious black child.[149]

It was not only in the classroom that black educators served their communities. In a study of the functions of black schools in Cincinnati during the years from 1850 to 1887, David Calkins pointed out that the segregated school system of that city had an important impact on the political life and social and economic differentiation of the entire black community. Before the creation of the black school system, Negroes in Cincinnati had a flat occupational structure since almost all workers were unskilled laborers and servants. With the exception of ministers, most of whom worked at other jobs for survival, there were few who could claim positions of leadership. But with the employment of Negroes as teachers and administrators new career lines opened and new sources of income and prestige appeared; in the first thirty-seven years of the schools, for instance, black teachers earned over $437,000. When black Gaines High School opened in 1866, it trained teachers, offered preparation for further education, and helped to create a middle class leadership for the city's black population. Black educators also provided a nucleus for a number of new voluntary groups and stimulated a social differentiation which helped to change the white community's stereotype of Negroes. As Calkins observes, the schools also provided a political outlet for ambitious blacks, for in the two decades before they gained full suffrage in 1870 they were empowered to elect their own school trustees. In this arena they gained skills and exercised power that became increasingly important with their enfranchisement. When the separate board for black schools was abolished in 1874, they lost this source of patronage and influence, and with the abandonment of _de jure_ segregation in 1887, through state action, the separate "colored schools" ceased to exist officially, though they remained in fact as a "branch school system" enrolling only black children.[150]

In most cities black citizens did not enjoy the kind of political power possessed by Negroes in Cincinnati in the years before 1874. In New York, for example, the black schools were controlled chiefly by white philanthropists until 1853 when the "Colored Free Schools" were transferred to the board of education of New York. In 1857 a group of black leaders told a state investigating committee about the wretched housing of these segregated schools. In proportion to black and white children enrolled in public schools, they said, the board of education had appropriated 1¢ per Negro child and $16 per white child, for sites and school buildings, even though there were proportionally 25 percent more black children attending school than white. The results were apparent in the school buildings for Afro-Americans: schools "dark and cheerless," wedged into neighborhoods that were "full of filth and vice"; one even had four feet of water in the basement. In contrast, the white schools were "splendid, almost palatial edifices, with manifold comforts, conveniences, and elegancies." It was, they said, "a costly piece of injustice which educates the white scholar in a palace ... and the colored pupil in a hovel ...." The only answer, they said, was to desegregate the white schools or build new colored ones.[151]

As in other cities, New York black teachers knew that they would lose their jobs if schools were mixed, and even though they were paid on the average $100 less than whites and kept down by a Catch-22 system of examiners' ratings, they had no other options. Under the ward system blacks had little power even when they could vote, for they were so scattered across the city and their numbers were so small that they could muster little power. Indeed, in 1866 the ward committees so neglected the black schools that ten of them were put under the central board of education (this was also the case in Pittsburg, where otherwise ward boards reigned supreme). After the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, especially, New York began building new Negro schools and renovating the old ones. After a new school law opened white schools to black children in 1873, however, the attendance in the "colored schools" dwindled; in 1863 the attendance of black students in the segregated schools had been 858, but by 1880 it was only 571. Black teachers retired, went to all-black schools in Philadelphia, Brooklyn, or Washington, or were dropped. The employment question fanned a harsh debate in the black community about the board's intention to abolish the separate schools, which were becoming uneconomical by the 1880's. In 1883 a black principal and her friends campaigned to get Negro pupils to attend her school on 17th Street, giving them free lunches and transportation. But as this effort failed, and as Governor Grover Cleveland spoke out against segregation, the state decided in 1884 to close the last colored schools. In a last minute gesture, a group of black citizens appealed to the legislature successfully to retain two colored schools with the understanding that they would also be open to whites. It was not until 1895, after an unsuccessful lawsuit, that a black teacher, Mrs. Susie Frazier, won an appointment to teach on a white faculty in the city.[152]

With its avowed dual system, Washington, D.C., presented still another pattern of governance of black urban education. When the Negro public schools began in 1862, a separate board of three trustees for the colored system was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior since the board for the white schools shirked its duty. Although the first board had only white trustees, by 1869 two of the three were black. That year Congress passed a bill transferring its powers to the board for white schools. The black community reacted bitterly and at a mass meeting resolved that this would subject the law establishing black schools "to the chances of being again refused, or at least being negligently or indifferently executed by persons whose positions are held by tenure of local politics and the prejudices consequent thereto." Such a change, they said, would expose the black community "to political hostility in circumstances where we are powerless." President Andrew Johnson vetoed the bill. In 1873 Congress passed a bill changing the board for the black schools to a nine-man group appointed by the Governor of the District; only black trustees were selected. The next year Congress set up a common board for both sets of schools composed of nineteen members, five of whom were black, and while the size and mode of selection of the board changed, there was a "gentleman's agreement" commonly in effect that a minority of the board members would be Negro. In turn, from 1868 to 1900 the superintendent of the colored schools, coordinate with the superintendent of the white schools, was a black educator. At any time the white majority on the board had the final power, and some said that the Negro members gained their positions by being toadies, but at least the arrangement gave blacks influence and good jobs (the last white teacher in the black schools withdrew in 1901). Apparently no other dual system of city schools had an integrated central board of education before 1940.[153]

In St. Louis black citizens lacked direct political power but won a share of influence on the schools nonetheless. Before the Civil War it had been a criminal offense to teach in a school for blacks, although some church schools in fact instructed Negroes. During the Civil War freedmen's organizations and local benevolent groups provided schools for 1,500 pupils under an umbrella agency of black members of the Board of Education for Colored Schools. The state constitution in 1865 required the city to educate Negroes; in 1866, St. Louis' white board of schools took over responsibility for a separate system of black schools. Even though the black population jumped from 3,297 in 1860 to 22,088 in 1870, blacks had little power at the polls since they "were not able to combine with their white neighbors" in ward politics, as Elinor Gersman observes, "and because they were scattered they could not form a solid black community either." Radical Republicans on the central school board wished to build schools for Negro students, appealing to the fact that blacks were taxpayers and that the law and sentiment of the community approved schooling as "common justice to the colored people." But Democrats ridiculed the idea of "extravagant school houses for the education of Negroes and said that if the Radicals "like to associate with niggerdom, as would seem to be the case, let them go to them, but not at the expense of the white men." In the 1866 election the Democrats won most city offices, including all the school positions up for consideration. Although the Radicals kept a small majority on the board of schools, they realized that public sentiment was for keeping the Negro down.[154]

Opponents of the black man had no cause to fear extravagance. The board searched for three months in vain to find anyone willing to rent rooms for a black school. For years black scholars attended classes in damp basements, dilapidated houses, and antiquated and abandoned white schools. Frustrated by such treatment, and eager for good education, black citizens were forced to build a school at their own expense in 1868. Only by constant pressure by lobbies like the Colored Educational Association, a group of teachers and ministers, did they persuade the board to provide ordinary services -- and that from a superintendent and set of trustees that were, for that time and place, benevolent. Benevolence was clearly a poor substitute for justice, lobbying a shaky form of power.[155]

Like other urban groups, the black citizens of St. Louis wanted both tangible and symbolic victories. By 1875 even the Radical Republican newspaper had dismissed the idea of desegregation through a Civil Rights Act, saying that "integration would work a great deal of mischief, and could do no good except in satisfaction of a little false pride on the part of colored children and their parents." Not surprisingly, with such white friends, the black community concentrated on equality since they were clearly to be separate. Beginning in 1874, Negroes pressed for black teachers for their schools. In 1877 their lobby argued that white teachers had "certain false and wicked ideas" which tainted their instruction; by contrast, black teachers knew the community, understood "the wants of their pupils and how to supply them," and could raise horizons of black children "by example and intercourse." Black families voted for Negro teachers with their feet: in the first three years after the introduction of black teachers, the number of pupils rose 35 percent (1878), 20 percent (1879), and 27 percent (1880).[156]

Jobs and good buildings were essential, but black pride bridled at the board's policy of giving Negro schools numbers instead of names, as in the white schools. In 1878 the Colored Educational Association requested the board to name the schools after prominent blacks like Toussaint L'Ouverture, Alexander Dumas, and Crispus Attucks. The board refused, suggesting instead that they be named for "men who have distinguished themselves in the cause of the colored race." In 1890, twelve years later, the board tried again unsuccessfully with a list of white benefactors, but in two more months agreed to a list of eminent Negroes, including L'Ouverture, Dumas, Attucks, and others like Ira Aldrigge, Benjamin Banneker, and Phyllis Wheatley. No doubt the black community learned much of their own history, as well as much about white men, in this battle of the names.[157]

As measured by attendance in schools and by literacy, the black faith in education in St. Louis and other northern cities persisted throughout the nineteenth century. In 1890 a larger percentage of blacks as a proportion of the St. Louis Negro population attended public school than whites -- 18.7 percent as opposed to 12.9 percent (although white attendance in private and parochial schools, as well as a different ratio of children to adults, may have accounted for much of the disparity). In the black seventh ward in Philadelphia in 1897, W.E.B. DuBois found that 85 percent of the Negro children, aged six to thirteen, attended school for at least part of the year. The illiteracy of youth ten to twenty years old in that city was only 4 percent.[158]

Nationwide the statistics showed an enormous stride ahead, despite the lagging progress in the rural South. In 1870 only 9.9 per hundred of Negro children five to nineteen attended school; by 1900 the figure had jumped to over 31. By contrast, and probably because of the influence of immigration, the comparative figures for white children actually declined from 54.4 to 53.6. Of those non-white men alive in 1940, those born about 1870 had on the average 2.8 years of schooling; those born about 1890 had approximately five years of schooling. The percentage of illiterate Negroes dropped from about 80 percent in 1870 to 44.5 percent in 1900.[159]

But where did better education lead? Were blacks to enjoy that luxury beloved of commencement orators, the value of "education for its own sake"? A teacher in the African Free Schools of New York said in 1830 "that, as the acquirement of knowledge is pleasing, delightful, and ennobling to the human mind, it is a wonder that these people [the black parents of the city] do not feel more interested in it for the sake of knowledge itself; but, is this abstract view of the subject sufficient to satisfy *our own minds in relation to our children*....?" In 1819 a black youth gave his answer at a graduation ceremony: "Why should I strive hard, and acquire all the constituents of a man, if the prevailing genius of the land admit me not as such, or but in an inferior degree!" At the end of an education, what lay ahead? "Shall I be a mechanic? No one will employ me; white boys won't work with me. Shall I be a merchant? No one will have me in his office; white clerks won't associate with me. Drudgery and servitude, then, are my prospective portion. Can you be surprised at my discouragement?" Almost a century later the only black principal in New York, Dr. William L. Buckley, told a reporter that "The saddest thing that faces me in my work is the small opportunity for a colored boy or girl to find proper employment." What was he to say to persuade a black youth that he should stay in school when a Negro "must face the bald fact that he must enter business as a boy and wind up as a boy." Dubois found that 79 percent of the employed black workers in the seventh ward of Philadelphia were laborers and servants; the number of skilled workers had declined from earlier years; and of the 61 individuals who were listed as "in the learned professions," 22 were clergymen and 17 were students. And in the years that Rayford Logan has described as a time of "Betrayal of the Negro," the employment situation in many cities got worse, not better. The St. Louis school reports told a distressing story; between 1880 and 1890 the percentage of black parents classified as unskilled rose from 62.5 percent to 75.1 percent, skilled workers declined from 255 to 171, mechanics dropped from 145 to 94, and merchants fell from 19 to 6.[160]

As the century came to a close, an episode in East Orange, New Jersey illustrated the potential of the powers of "classification" that had been awarded to school boards and professionals by numerous court cases and by a growing trust in a pseudo-scientific technology of discrimination. In 1899 the superintendent of schools in that suburb of Newark persuaded the board to "experiment" with an "ungraded" class of "backward colored pupils." Outraged, black leaders "suspected that the 'experiment' was nothing more than a not-too-subtle entering wedge for the establishment of a completely segregated school system." In fact the practice of Jim Crow classes continued, despite angry protests and boycotts, for as a professed liberal member of the board contended, teachers and parents felt that Negroes had "different temperaments." When asked why there were no whites in the special classes, one principal replied that there were no backward whites in his school. From there it was a clear path to an "ideal state school code" written by a leading northern educator in 1914, praising the unifying force of the common school, and noting that at the same time the state might set up separate schools for "defective, delinquent, and Negro children." Not surprisingly, the Alabama state superintendent asked him to come south the next year to rewrite their school laws.[161]

For black Americans the nineteenth century struggle to win educational justice had been lonely and unequal, its results impressive in themselves but problematic in their influence on the position of Negroes in the larger society. Whether they dealt with rednecks or benefactors, with tortuous jurisprudence or scientific racism, they learned that they must be wary. They wanted better education for their children and power to improve their status, and those related themes underlay debates about strategy and tactics, integration and segregation -- and in the larger struggle to come in urban schools, those themes would recur.

10. The Functions of Schooling

As U.S. Commissioner of Education and the leading schoolman of the era, William T. Harris had reason for pride as he looked back in 1898 on the accomplishments of American educators since 1870. In those twenty-eight years the number of pupils in public schools increased from less than 7,000,000 to 15,000,000; 71 of 100 persons between 5 and 18 years were enrolled in some school as compared with 61 in 1870; and expenditures jumped from $63,000,000 per year to $199,000,000 (a rise from $1.64 per capita of total population to $2.67). The typical young American of 1898 could expect to receive five years of schooling. Of 100 students in educational institutions 95 were in elementary schools, 4 in secondary, and 1 in a post-secondary school.[162]

Five years of education does not sound like much today, but to Harris it was "enough to enable the future citizen to read the newspaper, to write fairly well, to count, add, subtract, multiply and divide, and use the simplest fractions" as well as to know enough geography "to understand the references or allusions in his daily newspaper." The greatest accomplishment of the common schools was its "transformation of an illiterate population into a population that reads the daily newspaper," he believed, for through the media and other sources of information like the public library citizens could learn about the great public issues of the day and extend their education throughout a lifetime. In addition to academic skills that gave "the art of digging knowledge out of books", the graded urban schools imparted a discipline that is essential because of "the increase of cities and the growth of great industrial combinations." "Precision, accuracy, implicit obedience to the head or directive power, are necessary for the safety of others and for the production of any positive results." The rural school fails to do this, Harris observed, but the urban "school performs this so well that it reminds some people unpleasantly of a machine."[163]

In Harris' view -- probably shared by a majority of schoolmen and school trustees of the latter nineteenth century -- the functions of urban schooling were relatively clear-cut: to equip students with basic academic skills and knowledge and to provide a pattern of socialization that would fit them for participating in the corporate world of the city and nation. Acutely aware of obsolescence in vocational training, Harris did not see the schools as a means of channeling children into niches in the economy. In an age that glorified self-help and enthroned the self-made man, lengthy formal education was but one route toward success. Indeed, a common complaint against the high school from workingmen and businessmen alike was that the high school was a useless, expensive, and "aristocratic" institution.[164]

Using manuscript census returns and school reports, Selwyn Troen has done a careful study of which white children actually went to public schools in 1880 in St. Louis. (He has analyzed the education of black children in a separate study because of the particular effects of racism in their case). The following chart indicates the percentage of white children at certain key ages who were in school or employed (omitting the "unknown" category). (See page 91 for aforementioned chart). During the four years from eight through eleven, schooling reached nine out of ten children, while only a tiny number were working. By contrast, from the age of fourteen fewer than one half attended school, and many moved directly into the work force. The earlier a child left school, the likelier it was that he entered an unskilled job: 88 percent of those who went to work at twelve were unskilled or semi-skilled, whereas by age sixteen 47 percent were in those categories, and 21 percent in white collar positions. More girls than boys stayed in school after age ten, and fewer girls had jobs (facts which suggest, says Troen, that the later years of schooling had little economic significance for them and "served as a hiatus between the freedoms of early childhood and the responsibilities of marriage." Attendance in school from ages thirteen through sixteen increased from 31.7 percent for the children of unskilled workers to 80 percent for the sons and daughters of professional fathers. As Troen observes, "it made little difference whether the father of a child at eight or twelve was a physician or a boatman; for most children it made all the difference a few years later."[165] In St. Louis the drop-out age and years of attendance varied little from 1860 to 1908.

Age	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Attending School	56.2	80.6	89.0	90.1	90.9	89.3	82.0	70.7	48.9	35.1	19.3	11.6	5.4
Employed	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.6	2.1	3.6	9.4	17.5	33.0	43.1	60.0	64.2	68.7

It is easy to demonstrate class bias in the retention rates of different groups and to assert that the schools simply reflected the class structure of the city. But it is also crucial to recall that schooling played a far different role in 1880 than it did in 1970. When seen from the perspective of 1880, as Troen notes, it was a triumph to be teaching nine out of ten white children between the ages of eight and eleven. Both citizens and educators shared a common belief that a little schooling could go a long way in equipping children for the world they faced and that it was not only permissible but desirable for youth to enter the work force in their teens; in fact about a quarter of the sons of businessmen in the sample were employed at the ages of thirteen to sixteen. There were very few occupations for which extended education was a prerequisite in 1880, even though increasingly the persons occupying positions at the top of the professions and the corporate world had received some post-secondary education.[166]

Most educational leaders in the nineteenth century did not regard public schooling so much as a means of personal economic advancement -- a modest education coupled with good character and self-help would assure success to the ambitious individual -- as it was the essential foundation of harmony and stability. Many of the common school reformers -- insightful and humane persons like Horace and Mary Mann -- were deeply committed to improving the lives of individuals -- the poor, the neglected, the dispossessed, especially -- but the concern for children was also part of a more general anxiety about the future of the society. On all sides were threats to the fabric of society, the authority of the state: mobs and violence; corruption and radical ideas in politics; vice and immorality as village constraints broke down; immigrants who refused to become assimilated; conflict between labor and capital; and alarming increases in crime, poverty, and disease. In a disorderly society, schoolmen argued, the school must itself be a model of order, regularity, obedience -- a prototype of a conservative republic. To such leaders, public education was the most humane form of social control and the safest method of social renewal.[167]

"If we were to define the public school as an instrument for disintegrating mobs, we would indicate one of its most important purposes," declared an educator in 1882. Mob violence exploded again and again in American cities of the nineteenth century, sparked by religious, racial, ethnic, and class conflict: the burning of the Charlestown (Massachusetts) convent and the anti-Irish riot in 1834; "Bloody Monday" in Louisville in 1855, when Know-Nothing partisans tried to bar immigrants from the polls; the Draft Riot in New York in 1863 in which mobs brutally killed blacks and burned and looted buildings; the violent railroad strike of 1877 which spread city to city from Baltimore to San Francisco, leaving in its wake scores killed, hundreds wounded, and charred, gutted trains and buildings; the Pullman strike in Chicago in 1894 that pitted federal troops against a crowd of 10,000; and many others.[168]

To educational leaders such mobs -- "wild beasts, that prove their right to devour by showing their teeth," Horace Mann called them -- proved the need for more efficient education. After the strike of 1877 the U.S. Commissioner of Education warned of "the enormities possible in our communities if the systematic vagrancy of the ignorant, vicious, and criminal classes should continue to increase," and urged that "Capital, therefore, should weigh the cost of the mob and the tramp against the cost of universal and sufficient education." The president of the NEA that year reported that he had heard a citizen say that "'It was the good sense of an immense majority of working people, created, fostered, and developed by public education, that saved us from the terrors of the French Commune." In 1894, facing the industrial turmoil and the Populist excitement of that year, the NEA resolved at its annual meeting that "we deem it our highest duty to pronounce enthusiastically, and with unanimous voice for the supremacy of law and the maintenance of social and political order." In 1837 Governor Edward Everett warned that the militia had to be made dependable through proper schooling, for it was no "matter of indifference whether the honor and peace of the community are committed to an ignorant and benighted multitude ... or to an educated and intelligent population, whose powers of reflection have been strengthened by exercise, and who are able to discriminate between constitutional liberty and arbitrary power on the one hand, and anarchy on the other." Everett's fears were not groundless: quite often militia members called out to quell riots fraternized with the mobs instead.[169]

Schoolmen continued to regard the American republic -- and in particular its forms of city governance -- as an experiment in self-government whose success depended largely on the common school. In 1842, in a Fourth of July oration, Horace Mann declared that elsewhere the experiment had always failed "through an incapacity in the people to enjoy liberty without abusine it." Election days were often time "of turbulence and bacchanalian riot, of insulting triumph or revengeful defeat," instead of "days of thoughtfulness and of solemnity." Unless the citizenry becomes "both well informed and upright" only "darkness and degeneracy" lay ahead: fraud and bribery, corrupt juries, confiscation of wealth and exploitation of the poor, and if "even Washington should arise, and ... utter a warning voice, the mad populace would hurl him" to the ground. Politics after the Civil War seemed to many educators to confirm Mann's warnings. In 1880 a rationale for public education in Portland stressed that "the self-government of the government of the people is still in trial," and that amid the sweeping waves of immigration only the common school could train "every child in our own tongue and habits of thought, and principles of government and aims of life." One could trust "parental instinct" to educate a child, but the state required homogeneity; "the right of preservation of a body politic" took precedence over all other rights.[170]

Immigrants posed a sharp challenge to the common school. Not only was it difficult to socialize them politically, but they also seemed to defy the school's goal of eliminating vice, crime, and poverty, Justifying the use of corporal punishment in schools in immigrant wards, a member of the Boston school committee declared in 1889 that "many of these children come from homes of vice and crime. In their blood are generations of iniquity .... They hate restraint or obedience to law. They know nothing of the feelings which are inherited by those who were born on our shores." "It is largely through immigration that the number of ignorant, vagrant and criminal youth has recently multiplied to an extent truly alarming in some of our cities," wrote the secretary of the Connecticut board of education. "Their depravity is sometimes defiant and their resistance to moral suasion is obstinate." Clearly, to wean such children from their corrupt homes and neighborhoods, to train them in industry, temperance, and obedience, would require heroic effort -- and perhaps a different sort of institution from the traditional common school.[171]

The logic of the common school ideology led directly to the conclusion that truant children should be compelled to attend school, for it was precisely such children who needed training the most. From Joseph Tuckerman in Boston in the 1830's to Jacob Riis in New York in the 1890's, reformers chastized society for neglect of the children who learned from the school of the streets "disobedience to parents, prevarication, falsehood, obscenity, profanity, lewdness, intemperance, petty thievery, larceny, burglary, robbery, and murder ...." If family discipline and the traditional village restraints broke down, then the school must fill the moral vacuum. "In too many cases," wrote one advocate of a coercive attendance in Boston, "the parents are unfit guardians of their own children." The young people raised by such adults will become "worse members of society than their parents are; instead of filling our public schools, they will find their way into our prisons, houses of correction, and almshouses." The only remedy was "stringent legislation, thoroughly carried out by an efficient police" forcing truants into school. The state superintendent in California wrote that citizens should support compulsory education "to save themselves from the rapidly increasing herd of non-producers ... to save themselves from the wretches who prey upon society like wild beasts ...." For such children, the state should establish "labor schools, school ships, industrial and technical schools" so that children can be taught not only how to read but also "how to work."

As common school publicists moved from persuasion to coercion their conception of schooling subtly shifted as well. In the rhetoric of a Mann or a Barnard, public education was mostly a kind of preventive nurture, a training in consonance with an idealized family but supplementing it in ways that prepared pupils for a more complex society. In the arguments of many advocates of coercive attendance, and even more so in the actions of the police and truant officers who rounded up the street arabs, schooling became a form of preventive detention -- and often the intermediate step on the way to more total institutionalization in a reform school or in one of the many forms of incarceration for juveniles.[172]

Since so many of the urban truants were poor, of immigrant stock, and non-Protestant, -- in Boston in 1849, 963 of 1066 truants were children of foreign born -- it became tempting to school officials to put them in separate classes or separate institutions, despite the common school ideology of mixing all social groups under one roof. Even before the compulsory attendance laws of 1852 in Boston, the school committee had created de facto segregated "intermediate schools" catering to poor and immigrant children -- mostly Irish -- who did not meet the admissions requirements of the grammar schools. Indeed, when blacks in that city complained about being forced to attend all-black schools rather than their neighborhood schools, the primary school committee replied that they had already established "schools for special instruction," or intermediate schools, "to which all the white children of a certain class are obliged to go, even though they may pass a dozen of the regular schools on their way to them." By 1861 Philbrick argued for special industrial schools for "a class of children, more or less numerous, which is too low down in the depths of vice, crime, and poverty, to be reached by the benefits of a system of public education." Stanley Schultz observes that "Philbrick was concerned less with industrial benevolence toward the immigrant poor, and more with severing their associations with native children 'to purify and elevate the character of the public schools.'"[173]

Many teachers and administrators did not want the unwilling pupils which coercion would bring to their classrooms, even though police and downtown merchants might want to get children off the streets and curb hooliganism. A Massachusetts superintendent complained in 1870 that such children disrupted graded schools: "without any habits of study, unused to school order with discipline, coming by compulsion and not by choice, with no prospects of remaining longer than the law requires, and joining classes for which they had no real fitness ... [these children were disqualified] for membership."

When Chicago made some effort to enforce an 1889 law on compulsory attendance, Superintendent Howland said that 3,528 of the former truants were "subject for reform schools." A board committee on compulsory education reported that such incorrigibles "cause sufficient disturbance to have their absence heartily desired by the teacher and the principal." The Chicago committee said that these children were filthy and "not fitted for the ordinary classroom," urging that they be segregated in a special classroom or school. The committee on compulsory education reported in 1894 that it was practically hopeless to try to teach wayward children over seven years of age: "Careful research into the history of pauperism and criminality seems to show that the child's bent is fixed before his seventh year. If childhood is neglected, the child will mature lawless and uncontrolled and the final end will be the jail of the poorhouse ...." Florence Kelley, who was chief inspector in Illinois in the administration of the child labor law of 1893, found that principals expelled children at the age of eleven because they were "incorrigible" and found that school officials commonly flaunted the intent of the law.[174]

Besides the disinclination of teachers and administrators to teach the coerced child, there was a simple reason for the ineffectiveness of most compulsory education laws: in many cities there were not nearly enough places even for those who wanted to enroll. If all the children who were legally obliged to attend school had come to classrooms in Chicago in 1886, only one-third would have found seats. In San Francisco, parents importuned the board to admit their children even though classrooms were grossly overcrowded; in 1881 New York had to refuse admission to 9,189 pupils for want of room; in Philadelphia an estimated 20,000 children could not go to school for want of seats. Under such circumstances a compulsory attendance law was a farce.[175]

In 1885 Philbrick reported that only 16 out of 38 states had passed coercive laws, and these were mostly dead letters. They seem to have been sponsored largely by labor unions eager to prevent competition from child labor, by philanthropists eager to "save the child," and by politicians who saw it as a useful symbolic issue (in California, for example, Republicans largely voted for it in the Senate, while Democrats largely opposed it in 1874). Forrest Ensign argues that school people for the most part did not push the idea since they "did not want the poorly trained, uncultured child of the factory and workshop in their well-ordered schools." Nonetheless, the basic functions of the common school, and the increasingly accepted notion that "the children of the Commonwealth are public property" led to the conclusion that Philbrick stated in 1885: "Public instruction cannot be considered as having fulfilled its mission until it secures the rudiments of education to every child. To accomplish this object coercion is necessary." By 1900 Harris reported that 31 states had passed compulsory education laws, normally requiring attendance from eight to fourteen years of age. Although the laws were commonly ignored in some communities, and few prosecutions made, Harris maintained that they were useful in establishing a principle accepted by the law-abiding parents. The twentieth century educator would be faced with the full implications of preventive detention. It would not come as a surprise to find that the reform school and its curriculum would strike some educators as the best model for the reformulation of the common school for the new kind of students entering urban classrooms.[176]

As David Rothman has shown, the nineteenth century was an age of institutionalization when agencies separated the insane into asylums, the poor into almshouses, the criminal into prisons. Fear of disorder, of contamination, of the crumbling of familiar social forms such as the family, prompted reformers to create institutions which could bring order into the lives of deviant persons and, perchance, heal the society itself by the force of example. In time, however, he observes, "there seemed to be unbridgeable gaps between lower and upper classes, between Catholics and Protestants, between newcomers and natives that would not permit the reestablishment of traditional social arrangements." It became easier to remove such low status people from the cities than to reform them.[177]

In some respects the public education followed similar patterns and performed somewhat comparable functions. A certain category of people -- the young -- were taken away from the rest of society for a portion of their lives and separated in schools. Like inmates of the poorhouse, they were expected to learn "order, regularity, industry and temperance," and "to obey and respect" their superiors. As in some of the asylums, reformatories, and refuges, they were assorted in large groups "under a central administration" and followed an exact schedule and military routine. Schools, like other institutions, were supposed to counteract or compensate for indulgent or neglectful families. But urban schools of the nineteenth century, however routinized and rigid they may have been, were nonetheless not such total institutions as jails nor were they dead-end allies for most of the pupils; they occupied but a short period in the lives of most children. They "imposed" a curriculum and an urban discipline, but they also opened up opportunities that many of the students might otherwise never have had: to read a newspaper, to compute, to know something of history and geography, to speak standard English. These new skills often created alternatives for the literate that were unavailable to the illiterate. And the structure of the school did teach habits of punctuality, obedience, and precision that did help the young to adjust to the demands of the world of work. Today it is easy to see that urban education did more to industrialize humanity than to humanize industry, but many educators agreed with Harris that mechanization was but a phase in a longer evolution that might one day largely liberate workers from the toil that had been their lot for centuries.[178]

Increasingly, educators in the latter nineteenth century came to believe that without proper schooling of urban children the whole technological and corporate apparatus of the nation might crumble. Thus popular education was not incidental but integral, not just a moral duty but an economic and social necessity: "the modern industrial community cannot exist without free popular education carried out in a system of schools ascending from the primary grade to the university." As the cause of the common school crusade became institutionalized into the functions of urban bureaucracies, leading schoolmen talked more in terms borrowed from corporate enterprise and social science and less in evangelical rhetoric.[179]

A case in point is a report submitted in 1890 to the National Council of the NEA. This statement on "School Superintendence in Cities" began by quoting Herbert Spencer's affirmation that "'a differentiation of structure and a specialization of function is the law of all growth and progress." Combination, they said, gives power, as in the case of large corporations, but the division of labor has produced "the marvelous industrial progress of the present century .... The specialist is the most characteristic product of modern civilization."[180]

In the evolution of schools the authors saw the same principle of specialization of function. From education in the family, to combination in "the one-teacher school, the representative of the family, and modeled after it," to the development of specialized schools such as academies or colleges, and finally to large state systems, the story was one of combination coupled with differentiation. Cities, however, lagged behind the progress of other large organizations in division of labor and expert direction. "'School administration in cities is still organized essentially as it was when the cities were villages.'" The reason: boards of education originally performed all functions, "legislative, executive, and judicial," and refused to relinquish them. As a result, remarked William H. Maxwell the Brooklyn superintendent, "the board of education serves several purposes and none of them well." Although most boards "have not a very lively sense of their incompetency in these directions," the remedy is obvious: commit administration "to a superintendent selected because of his known ability, not merely 'to run schools,' but to devise, organize, direct, and make successful a rational system of instruction." Maxwell described the results of lay control on the school managers: "performance without responsibility is not equal to performance with responsibility. The functions of these officers [superintendents and principals] are at best but advisory. Their best efforts may be nullified by those who hold the reins of authority." As Maxwell said, under such arrangements, "the strongest and wisest of superintendents may well grow weary of well-doing, and instead of leading the vanguard of progress, content himself with trying to avert the dangers that continually threaten our public schools. Under such a system the strongest and wisest of superintendents may be pardoned if he degenerates into a not ignoble specimen of arrested development."[181]

As schoolmen confronted the urban social crises of the late nineteenth century, they increasingly advocated structural changes which which would give themselves more power. More efficient, non-political, rational bureaucracies were the answer to poverty, faulty ideologies, crime, social splintering, and class conflict. Echoes of earlier ideologies persisted; lines of actual development were as yet unclear as the century drew to a close. It was not until the midst of a successful campaign to reform the schools from the top down that a prime mover of centralization, Nicholas Murray Butler, could confidently assert, to the applause of the Merchant's Club of Chicago, that he should "as soon think of talking about the democratization of the treatment of appendicitis" as to speak of "the democratization of schools." "The fundamental confusion is this: Democracy is a principle of government; the schools belong to the administration; and a democracy is as much entitled as a monarchy to have its business well done." A common school run for the people but not by the people -- but during the nineteenth century the urban villagers often frustrated the plans of the managers. What schoolmen and their allies wanted was a shift of power. That would be the goal of reform from the top down at the turn of the century.[182]

PART III.

CENTRALIZATION AND THE CORPORATE MODEL: REFORM FROM THE TOP DOWN, 1890-1920

1. Introduction

They talked about accountability, about cutting red tape, about organizing coalitions to push educational reform, about the need to face the realities of class and power in American society. "They" were members of an interlocking directorate of business and professional elites, including university people and the new school managers. At the turn of the twentieth century, they planned a basic shift in the control of urban education which would vest political power in a small committee composed of "successful men." They wished to emulate the process of decision-making used by men on the board of directors of a modern business corporation. They planned to delegate almost total administrative power to an expert superintendent and his staff so that they could reshape the schools to fit the new economic and social conditions of an urban-industrial society. They rejected as anachronistic, inefficient, and potentially corrupt the older methods of decision-making and school politics. Effective political reform, said one of their leaders might require "the imposition of limitations upon the common suffrage." They ridiculed "the exceedingly democratic idea that all are equal" and urged that schooling be adapted to social stratification.[1]

As we have seen, during the nineteenth century urban schoolmen and their lay allies were slowly moving towards the strategy which would shape the centralization movement during its heyday, the years from 1890 to 1920. Elites had often controlled urban education, both public and private. From the 1870's forward, reformers like Philbrick and the patrician businessman Charles Francis Adams had called for small, "non-political" boards which would delegate the actual administration of the schools to experts. But until the 1890's in most large cities the school board remained large, ward boards kept substantial powers, and the whole mode of lay management was diffuse, frequently self-contradictory, and prone to conflict. Defenders of the ward system argued that grass-roots interest in the schools and widespread participation in school politics was healthy, indeed necessary, in large cities, but centralizers saw only corruption, parochialism, and vestiges of an outmoded village mentality. The men and women who sought centralization of control and social efficiency in urban education at the turn of the century--the people I shall call the "administrative progressives"--wished nothing less than a fundamental change in the structure and process of decision-making. Their social perspective tended to be cosmopolitan yet paternalistic, self-consciously "modern" in its deference to the expert and its quest for rational efficiency yet at times evangelical in its rhetorical tone.[2]

As Joseph Cronin and others have shown, the administrative progressives were notably successful -- indeed, their success so framed the structure of urban education that the subsequent history of these schools has been in part an unfolding of the organizational consequences of centralization. In 1893 in the twenty-eight cities having populations of 100,000 or more, there were 603 central school board members -- an average of 21.5 per city; in addition, there were hundreds of ward board members in some of the largest cities. By 1913, the number of central school board members in those cities had dropped to 264, or an average of 10.2, while the ward boards had all but disappeared and most central board members were elected at large. By 1923 the numbers had continued to diminish until the median was seven members. Case studies of centralization in particular cities as well as large-scale investigations of urban school boards in general indicate that school boards after centralization were overwhelmingly composed of business and professional men.[3]

But as important as the size and membership of school boards was the change in the procedures of decision-making. Increasingly the model of the corporate board of directors with its expert manager became the norm. The crucial changes were the reduction or elimination of administrative subcommittees of the board together with turning over the power of initiative and the agenda largely to the superintendent.[4]

The "administrative progressives" (1) were a movement with identifiable actors and coalitions; (2) had a common ideology and platform; and (3) gained substantive power over urban education. Their movement and program closely resemble Samuel P. Hays' interpretation of general municipal "progressive" reform. The experience of centralization in cities like New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis and San Francisco indicates that the chief support for reform "did not come from the lower or middle classes, but from the upper class." Like reforms in public health, city government, or police and welfare work, urban educational reform followed a familiar pattern of muckrakers' exposure of suffering, corruption, or inefficiency; the formation of alliances of leading citizens and professional experts who proposed structural innovations; and a subsequent campaign for "non-political" and rational reorganization of services. Public rhetoric might portray a contest between "the people" versus "the politicians," but as Hays says, the reformers wished "not simply to replace bad men with good; they proposed to change the occupational and class origins of decision-makers."[5]

During this period there was a blurring of the lines between "public" and "private" in the corporate liberal quest for a stable, predictable, rational social organization. While educational reformers spoke of schools as "quasi-public corporations" and emulated the business board of directors as a model of "public" control, liberal industrialists founded Americanization classes, kindergartens, and day care centers in factories, improved working conditions and health care for their workers, and provided a variety of fringe benefits calculated to enlist the loyalty and reliability of labor. Public school managing often catered to the wishes of their "major stockholders," the business leaders, especially with regard to vocational education and citizenship training. Civic-minded elites such as the Chamber of Commerce of Cleveland supported programs to build new schools, to improve public health, and to create playgrounds and vacation schools. "Progressive" school superintendents found such businessmen their natural allies in reform: to change the schools, however, one first needed to concentrate power at the top so that the experts could take over.[6]

2. An Interlocking Directorate and Its Blueprint for Reform

It is time to face the facts, Charles Eliot told the Harvard Teachers' Association in 1908: our society "is divided, and is going to be divided into layers whose borders blend, whose limits are easily passed by individuals, but which, nevertheless, have distinct characteristics and distinct educational needs." Freedom produces inequalities, and it is foolish to educate each child to be President of the United States. There are "four layers in civilized society which are indispensable, and so far as we can see, eternal": a thin upper one which "consists of the managing, leading, guiding class -- the intellectual discoverers, the inventors, the organizers, and the managers and their chief assistants"; next the skilled workers, whose numbers are growing with the application of technology to production; third, "the commercial class, the layer which is employed in buying, selling and distributing"; and finally the "thick fundamental layer engaged in household work, agriculture, mining, quarrying, and forest work." By discovering the talented child in the lower layers -- "the natural-history 'sport' in the human race" -- the school might foster mobility among the layers, but it should be reorganized so that it might serve each class "with keen appreciation of the several ends in view" -- i.e., to each layer its own appropriate form of schooling.[7]

Several key groups within Eliot's thin "upper layer" formed an interlocking directorate in the campaign to centralize control of schools on the corporate model and to make urban education socially efficient. The most prominent spokesmen for reform were university presidents and professors of educational administration, some of the "progressive" city superintendents, leading businessmen and lawyers, and elite men and women in reform groups like the Public Education Associations and civic clubs. Eliot was encouraged that "a few disinterested and active men may sometimes get good legislation out of an American legislature." Three men "acting under a single leader

... obtained from the Massachusetts legislature the act which established the Boston School Committee of five members. The name of that leader was James J. Storrow. I am happy to believe that the group were all Harvard men." In St. Louis, said Eliot, "a few citizens ... went to the Missouri legislature and procured the abolition of their former school committee" and the enactment of a reform plan.[8] According to Andrew S. Draper, briefly the superintendent of schools in Cleveland and superintendent of schools for New York State, three lawyers and a businessman pushed through the Ohio legislature the bill centralizing control of education in that city.

"As it becomes more and more imperative to have strong men, honest and experienced men to manage the business of great cities," Draper observed, "it also becomes, for obvious reasons, more and more difficult to secure them on the basis of an unrestricted suffrage. It is therefore meet that the best thought of the country should be turned, as it is turned, to plans for the government of cities." One cannot expect reform of urban education from the men and women who presently serve as board members or employees, he argued "any advance ... will have to come from outside the schools: it is more than likely to have to be made in spite of the opposition of the schools. The school boards are jealous of prerogatives; the teachers are apprehensive .... The leaders of the intellectual life of the city will have to evolve a plan; and the masses will have to be educated to its support."[9]

"Leaders of the intellectual life of the city" -- and of its social and economic institutions as well -- were indeed the interlocking directorate of the centralization movement across the nation. As men who had perfected large organizations, they had national reference groups and thought in cosmopolitan rather than merely local terms. Successful in their own careers, they assumed that what was good for their class and private institutions was good public policy as well. At the turn of the century, business and professional men increasingly valued specialized education and expertise -- rejecting the earlier glorification of the self-made, undifferentiated man "who can turn his hand to anything." Increasingly they turned to universities to get standards of truth and taste, authority and expertise. These leaders were impressed with the newly-developed forms of corporate structure which had revolutionized decision-making in vast business organizations. They were convinced that the way to improve urban schools was to place on school boards a few "Americans of good quality -- that is honest men who have proved their capacity in private business" and to turn the schools over to the progressive experts -- "a man who, knowing the shortcomings and defects in his business, is eager to try experiments in overcoming them."[10]

In 1912 two of the new "progressive experts," David Snedden (Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts) and Samuel Dutton (Professor of Administration at Teachers College) surveyed the movement to centralize control of schools and concluded that "no one can deny that under existing conditions the very salvation of our cities depends upon the ability of legislatures to enact such provisions as will safeguard the rights of citizens, take the government from ignorant and irresponsible politicians, and place it in the hands of honest and competent experts." Like Draper, they disdained the electorate of the great cities; like him, they wondered if it might not be possible to "safeguard the rights of citizens" by disenfranchising or at least weakening the power of the wrong sort of people by means of state action. They shared a distrust of the democratic process with a number of patrician reformers and conservative social scientists who urged reforms to take not only the schools but urban government itself out of politics.[11]

Melvin Holli has described the elite assumptions and program of such structural reformers: "the first wave of prescriptive municipal government ... placed its faith in rule by educated, upper class Americans and, later, by municipal experts rather than the lower classes." While originally it seemed right to have patricians themselves run the city, it seemed easier and more stable and efficient to administer urban government by trained experts instead, as in the city manager plan that was modeled largely on the structure of a business corporation. A former mayor of New York, patrician Abram Hewitt, argued in 1901 that "ignorance should be excluded from control ... city business should be carried on by trained experts selected upon some other principle than popular suffrage." Columbia Professor Frank Goodenow, who was active in the interlocking directorate of school reform, argued that urban decline in New York began in 1857 when "the middle classes ... were displaced by an ignorant proletariat, mostly foreign born." Goodenow and other theorists thought that southern methods of disfranchising blacks might be adapted to the urban North once people realize that "universal suffrage inevitably must result in inefficient and corrupt government." In 1891 an NEA committee on state school systems endorsed the idea of limiting "the elective franchise by excluding the grossly ignorant and vicious classes," thereby making a compulsory common school the doorway to citizenship. In 1909 Ellwood Cubberley expressed a point of view common among WASP educators when he declared that the "new immigrants" from southeastern Europe were "illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order and government." James Bryce explained, however, why the structural reformers did not succeed in open disfranchisement of the newcomers: "Nobody pretends that such persons are fit for civic duty, or will be dangerous if kept for a time in pupilage, but neither party will incur the odium of proposing to exclude them."[12]

Although patrician reformers and elite theorists won some victories in their campaigns to sanitize and professionalize city government generally, the failure of economy-minded structural reformers to provide better services to the masses of the urban residents often made their triumphs short-lived. In education, however, the process of "keeping the schools out of politics" through charter reform, boards of "successful" men, and expert direction proved to be more durable than in most other sectors of city politics -- in part, probably, because many of the school reformers were committed to substantive social reforms within the schools as well as structural reforms in school governance. Economy was sometimes a major motive in educational reform, but quite often the schools on the corporate model cost considerably more than the ones they replaced.[13]

One great advantage of the interlocking directorate of urban school centralizers was its access to -- and frequently control of -- the mass media and the magazines read by opinion leaders. In the battle to destroy the ward school boards in New York, for example, the reformers enjoyed nearly total control of news and editorials in the major newspapers of that city as well as an inside track to such periodicals as Harper's Weekly, The Outlook, and The Critic. Thereby they could define the nature of the problem in such a way that their remedies seemed self-evident and opposition to reform selfish and misguided. Grass-roots politics of education in the ward system could be defined as corruption of parochialism. Practically unchecked power to classify students and to differentiate the curriculum could be defined as the legitimate province of the professional expert. A shift of the method of selection of school boards to favor the upper-middle and upper classes could be explained as a means of getting "better" public officials. The slogan "get the schools out of politics" could disguise effective disfranchisement of dissenters. The quoted opinions of "experts" could be used to squelch opposition. Most of the educational muckrakers -- like Rice, Adele Marie Shaw, and other writers for popular magazines -- agreed that the source of the evils they described was corruption and lack of expertise in running the schools, thereby accepting the centralizers' definition of the problem.[14]

University presidents and professors of educational administration helped to create a useful consensus of "experts" on the reorganization of urban schools. Presidents Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia, William Rainey Harper of Chicago, and Andrew Sloan Draper of the University of Illinois achieved national prominence in the movement, speaking before reform associations, writing in national periodicals, and masterminding political strategy in a number of cities. When he was a professor at Columbia, Butler and elite allies commanded a "school war" in 1896 which destroyed the ward school boards in New York. Harper was chairman of an educational commission in Chicago whose report in 1899 was a compendium of centralist reforms. His roster of advisers for the report listed some of the most eminent university presidents of the day: in addition to Eliot, Butler and Draper, it included David Starr Jordan of Stanford, Daniel Gilman of Johns Hopkins, and J.G. Shurman of Cornell. It was common for presidents to become city cuperintendents and vice versa: Andrew Draper left the Cleveland Superintendency to become head of the University of Illinois; E. Benjamin Andrews managed the Chicago Schools after serving as President of Brown University; Josiah Pickard went to the University of Iowa as president after serving as Chicago superintendent; Daniel Coit Gilman was a prominent candidate for the New York Superintendency (Butler declared that had Gilman served "for two or three years," he would have reorganized "the New York school system and put it on its feet"). Harper, Gilman, and Harvard's Abbott Lawrence Lowell were school board members in Chicago, Baltimore, and Boston, respectively. Eliot, Butler, and Jordan all served as presidents of the NEA, while Draper and Gilman were presidents of departments of the NEA. Eliot, said the Brooklyn superintendent, "has done more to accelerate educational progress in this country ... than all the professors of pedagogy taken together."[15]

Essentially, these university presidents regarded the ideal role of large city superintendent as parallel to their own careers. In explaining to Mayor Gaynor of New York why school board members should not be paid, Butler made an analogy to his own board of trustees at Columbia, arguing that the paid professional -- the president or superintendent -- should be in command with only general oversight by the governing board. Schoolman William Mowry said urban school boards should treat superintendents the way the Harvard Corporation dealt with President Eliot. The city superintendent was to be a captain of education, a commander whose scope was limited only by the reach of his statesmanship. "The types of men that the educational methods of America have developed appear to me to be entirely different from what we produce at home," wrote the British investigator Alfred Mosely in the report of his education commission in 1903. Butler, he thought, was not only a scholar but also has "the initiative and organizing capacity that are required in a railroad president or chairman." Eliot, likewise, runs a great university but also "steps out into the area of public affairs" and is "one of the moving spirits of the Civic Federation," an organization which sought accommodation between big business and big labor. Entrepreneur Harper of Chicago managed the University of Chicago after he "actually himself raised the money to bring it into existence." Such educators felt at home with the men of great wealth and power and worked easily with them to bring about changes in the structure of urban schools which might permit wide powers for the new managers of urban education.[16]

University presidents also appreciated the challenge of the city superintendency and the opportunity for universities to prepare the new managers. In introducing William Maxwell to a University of Chicago convocation, President Harper declared: "I am convinced that next in difficulty and in importance to the work of the president of the United States stands that of the superintendent of schools in our great cities." Butler told the Merchants' Club of Chicago that the superintendency is a "learned profession" and that "nobody is too big to be superintendent of schools of the city of the Chicago ...." In a eulogy of the "new profession" of the school superintendency in 1898, President Charles F. Thuing of Western Reserve University wrote that "the present drift in American education is away from democratic toward monarchical control." The king needed a university training.[17]

The actual job of helping to create a "learned profession" out of the superintendency fell to another key group in the interlocking directorate of centralizers, the professors of educational administration. Although they lacked the power and access to the intimate circle of the business elite enjoyed by university presidents, most of them admired businessmen and were in turn often accepted by corporate leaders as useful allies. By the turn of the century, specialized university training was becoming the hallmark of the "expert" so touted by progressive reformers. The problem facing the professors of education was to find a base of knowledge on which to build this expertise. When Cubberley started his career at Stanford in 1898, for example, he faced the common problem of how to define the field. This was no trivial matter; President Jordan told him that he must either make the education department intellectually respectable in three years or see it abolished. Cubberley faced staggering obstacles. As he examined the literature of education, he discovered how scanty it was: a few works in the slowly emerging field of psychology; a handful of books by experienced educators recounting professional folklore; a few writings of European educational theorists, supplemented here and there by an American like W.T. Harris -- hardly the basis for scientific expertise. Thus Cubberley had to discover what it was he should be teaching, had to convince his colleagues that it was worth academic credit, had to recruit students who thought the training was worth their tuition. He succeeded, as did other professors at centers like Teachers College, Columbia and the University of Chicago.[18]

The new professors of educational administration gave the stamp of university approval to elitist assumptions about who constituted good school board members and to the corporate model of school organization. They tried to develop "scientific" ways of measuring inputs and outputs in school systems as a tool of management, and to elaborate ways in which the school might adapt its structure and curriculum to fit new industrial and social conditions.[19]

University professors and presidents had an advantage denied to many schoolmen in the field: they were not vulnerable to pressures from school boards and thus could speak their minds while still keeping their jobs. Superintendent Seaver of Boston, for example, served on NEA committees which decried the system of administering schools by subcommittees of the board, but at home he had to cope with the tangle of overlapping jurisdictions they created (in fact, even his authority to ring the no-school bell on snowy days was in doubt). The New York School Board forbade even the eminent William Maxwell of New York on one occasion ~~to~~ attend the meetings of the NEA. The newsman Truman DeWeese observed in 1900 that "the relations of schoolmen to school boards have tended to discourage fearless discussion on their part of the manifest flaws and abuses of the system." As a result of this reticence or resistance of school officials, lay reform groups in a number of cities found it useful to employ university professors to give advice -- usually knowing in advance what the advice would be, for by the second decade of the twentieth century the wisdom of professors of educational administration had become canonical. As school boards became reformed, they increasingly demanded university-trained experts, thereby expanding the market for courses in educational administration.[20]

By 1913 the new set of experts had become quite cohesive and well linked with the interlocking directorate of lay centralizers. When a member of the Chamber of Commerce and of the School Board in Portland, Richard Montague, wrote a dozen professional educators that year asking their advice about people to conduct a survey of the city's schools, he received the following nominations (the asterisk marks those cases in which the person nominated was also one of the letter writers; the numeral indicates the number of times the person was suggested):

*Ellwood P. Cubberley of Stanford	8
*Edward C. Elliott of Wisconsin	8
*Paul H. Hanus of Harvard	7
*George D. Strayer of Teachers College.	7
*Charles H. Judd of Chicago	4
*Edward Thorndike of Teachers College	3
James H. Van Sickle, Supt. of Springfield,Mass.. .	3
*E.C. Moore of Yale	3

Thirteen others were mentioned in the letters, including Leonard Ayres of the Russell Sage Foundation and David Snedden, Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts. The leading university experts, like their presidents, became nationally known, peripatetic speakers and consultants. They spoke not only with each other, as in the small in-groups of the Cleveland conference composed of men like Judd, Cubberley, Elliott, Hanus and Strayer, but also to patricians concerned with educational reform.[21]

As case studies of centralization in individual cities illustrate, the group of most politically potent segment of the interlocking directorate was the leading business and professional men who took an interest in school reform. Often their wives and daughters took an active part in the movement through organizations like the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, the Public Education Associations of New York, Philadelphia, and other cities, and the women's auxiliaries of civic clubs. In 1898 delegates from local education societies met to form the Conference of Eastern Public Education Associations, a coalition which met in different cities each year to share reform strategies and "to learn from trained experts in the educational world the results of efforts along special lines that lead to a broader development of school life." In its early years the Public Education Association (PEA) of New York relied heavily on Nicholas Murray Butler for advice, its president saying in 1896 that "A meeting of the Association without Dr. Butler was like the play 'Hamlet' with Hamlet left out."[22]

In turn, Butler and his elite allies found the PEA useful in the "school war" against the ward boards, for the society women proved to be effective lobbyists in Albany, having tea with the Governor's wife and buttonholing legislators. The society ladies also prodded their husbands' sense of duty. Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson chided the leisured gentlemen of Philadelphia at a joint meeting of that city's Public Education Association and the department of education of its Civic Club:

> they actually take a decided pride in their contempt of public service; and in this country -- which is supposed to be governed by the will of the majority -- the children of educated and well-effected parents are brought up to look with horror and disgust upon the idea of taking an active part in city affairs.... clean, upright, intelligent men of leisure ... daily conscientiously condemn evil-doing and mismanagement -- whether through omission or commission -- of public interest, without its ever occurring to them that they each are morally accountable for it; for their family traditions, their influence, their leisure and wealth, could be used with the greatest credit to themselves, for the greatest advantage of their fellow-citizens, and to the greatest honor of their city, could they but be applied to the furtherance of the public welfare.

The members of the New York PEA wanted to make the school board a fit place for a gentleman and the public schools -- which their own children often did not attend -- fit places for resocializing the children from the "peculiar environment" of the neighborhoods "below 14th Street." If the New York schools "had not adapted itself to, or conquered, that environment," said the Visiting Committee of the PEA, "it was clearly no system at all." As Sol Cohen has observed, "the ladies articulated the generally accepted goal of New York city school reform .... Progressive education arose in an effort to shape a school system to meet the needs of the East Side." Herbert Welch told the Philadelphia elite that a model for their own role in educational reform was Samuel Chapman Armstrong, "the great teacher of the Negro and the Indian," who was as "great a practical genius in the education of plebeian races as Arnold in the education of an aristocracy ...."[23]

The elite reformers often combined paternalistic sentiment -- which harkened back to the days of charity schools -- with hard-headed modern notions about school organization. As members of a national business elite they exchanged ideas about strategy and structure; St. Louis reformers, for example, borrowed a plan developed by a New York commission, while businessmen from Boston and St. Louis advised merchants in Chicago about how to reorganize their school system. Chambers of Commerce as well as reform associations and municipal research bureaus funded by the rich spread news of urban reforms to a national constituency.[24]

One important phase of reform was the restructuring of urban school politics to promote more representation by elites on school boards: -- i.e., to give more power to their people. A small "non-partisan" board elected at large was well calculated, they thought, to accomplish this purpose. As neighborhoods became increasingly segregated by income -- and often by race and ethnicity as well -- election by wards reduced the percentage of positions on the board available to urban elites. But if members were elected at large under a "non-partisan" system which was independent of place of residence or party endorsement, leading businessmen and professionals could use the media and their reform associations for publicity that gave name-familiarity and hence an edge at the ballot box. In cities where they trusted the mayor, some reformers preferred appointment rather than election. And in fact, the proportion of elite board members rose sharply after charters that destroyed the ward system in cities like Philadelphia, Pittsburg, and St. Louis. In the next section we shall examine the change in Philadelphia and St. Louis. In Pittsburg, as the method of selection of board members shifted from election to appointment, the fifteen members selected in 1911 "included ten businessmen with city-wide interests, one doctor associated with the upper class, and three women previously active in upper-class public welfare."[25]

Experts in education customarily agreed that "successful citizens" made the best school board members and that the ward system produced corruption and inefficiency. "Wards come to be known as the 'fighting third,' 'the red-light fourth,' 'the socialistic ninth,' or the 'high-brow fifth,'" wrote Cubberley; "and the characteristics of these wards are frequently evident in the composition of the board of education." In 1892 the United States Commissioner of Education, William T. Harris, stated what was to become the conventional wisdom in writings on school administration. There are three common types of school board members, he said: "First, the businessmen chosen from the class of merchants, bankers, and manufacturers, or professional men who have no personal ends to serve and no special cause to plead .... Second, there are the men representing the element of reform or change ... honest and well-meaning, but ... prone to ... an unbalanced judgment .... A third class of men ... is the self-seeking or selfish man ...." The first, of course, were the superintendent's natural allies; the second he must "educate into broader views" (and he might even adopt some of their suggestions "after freeing them from all features of danger to the established order").[26]

The notion that successful men were disinterested found nearly universal expression in the early textbooks on school management. In a book published in 1904 -- and plagiarized by successors -- William Chancellor wrote that these groups made good board members:

> 1. Manufacturers accustomed to dealing with bodies of men and with important business interests ....
>
> 2. Merchants, contractors, bankers, and other men of large affairs. A board of education controls a business, and deals with the business side of education.
>
> 3. Physicians, if successful in practice ....
>
> 4. College graduates in any walk in life who are successful in their own affairs remember what education has done for them.

His list of people who need not apply:

> 1. Inexperienced young men, whatever be their calling.
> 2. Unsuccessful men.
> 3. Old men retired from business.
> 4. Politicians.
> 5. Newspaper men.
> 6. Uneducated and unlearned men.
> 7. Men in subordinate business positions.
> 8. Women.

A board composed of successful people, argued the administrative progressive, would run the business efficiently, respect the expertise of the superintendent, and consider the needs of the city as a whole rather than those of wards or interest groups. Any necessary diversification of the school program could safely be left in the hands of the superintendents "who will really represent the interests of the children."[27]

Rare indeed was the schoolman who would argue that businessmen did not necessarily represent the good of the polity at large. The most influential doubter and dissenter was Professor George Counts who wrote that the supposed disinterestedness of the elite "is a pious fraud. The member of a dominant group, because he is peculiarly tempted to identify the interests of society with the interests of his class, is particularly inclined to regard himself as a spokesman for society at large."[28]

Statistics on school board membership in cities after the centralization movement indicated that business and professional men did indeed predominate on urban boards. Scott Nearing found in 1916 that more than three-fifths of the members of city committees were merchants, manufacturers, bankers, brokers and real estate men, and doctors and lawyers. Subsequent studies by George Struble and George Counts confirmed that wage earners and women were grossly underrepresented.[29]

Simply getting "successful" men on school boards was only part of the problem. In a number of cities -- especially those that elected small boards from the population at large and not by wards -- it is likely that elites had all along enjoyed disproportionate membership on school committees; such seems to have been the case in Denver and Portland, for example. Even in those centers of centralist reform, Boston and New York, the central boards of education had usually included many leaders in business and the professions. Among the 116 persons on the Boston School Committee in 1874, for example, were 23 merchants, 20 physicians, 13 lawyers, 12 officers of banks and similar associations, 11 clergymen, and only a small scattering of wage earners; what was wrong with Boston then, said reformers, was "the system, not men." In New York men from the top echelons of society had controlled the Free School Society and continued to serve as Presidents of the central board of education during most of the nineteenth century. Butler observed about the board of education that traditionally "the very best citizenship of the city has been represented in its membership ...." This was, of course, not the case, in Butler's opinion, for the membership of most of the ward boards in New York.[30]

Although it was important to have "disinterested" -- i.e., "successful" -- board members, old patterns of decision-making frustrated the effectiveness of even the most efficient businessmen. Under the traditions of lay management inherited from the village school, school board members still handled myriad administrative details. Boston was a case in point. In 1874 reformers complained that members of the

School Committee thought too much about their own districts, decided minutiae of administration in subcommittees, and indulged in "too much speech-making." A quarter of a century later Boston reformers were still making the same charges. Supervisors of special subjects like drawing or music were accountable not to the superintendent but to subcommittees of the Boston board. S.A. Wetmore, who served on the Boston Committee from 1894 to 1897, said that under the archaic system "the superintendent and his supervisors are mere figureheads." "The feeling that I should be called upon to formulate a course of study for a primary class, or a Latin school, or a manual-training school, became oppressive," he wrote, "when I realized that I was not what is called 'equipped' for such service; nor did I hanker for the opportunity to designate what text-books should be used in the schools; a task which, in fact, amounts to nothing more than choosing between text-book publishing houses." Factions in the board -- religious, political, ethnic, commercial, even academic -- had full play, especially in the battles over textbooks. "If we can't have Frye's Geography," asserted a member of the reform group on the board after a memorable textbook struggle, "they shan't have Metcalf's Grammar." James Storrow, prime mover behind the 1905 bill to reduce the board to five members, complained that the old Committee of twenty-four members had conducted its business -- most of it properly the duty of the superintendent -- in twenty-nine closed-door subcommittees, while using the public meetings strictly for unnecessary debate: "The desks of the members were grouped in horseshoe form around a rostrum, where sat the presiding officer. Proceedings were very formal; points of order were constantly raised; formal debates were held; many epithets were hurled back and forth; and type-written speeches were often delivered, intended more for the galleries and the newspapers than the members of the Board."[31]

In Philadelphia, Scott Nearing studied how the "reformed" board operated after a new school law had reduced its number from forty-three to twenty-one members. The "most prominent" committeemen from the old board were retained on the new one and perpetuated the procedures of the former organization. The result was that the superintendent continued to be ineffectual, while the real work of the board was delegated to ten subcommittees which dealt with such matters as textbooks and supplies, the election of teachers, and buildings. Of 1,386 resolutions approved by the board, all but 63 emanated from the subcommittees (whose recommendations were usually accepted without discussion). "The great corporations of the country are governed by small boards of directors," observed Nearing. "It is a recognized fact that business can be effectively transacted in no other way."[32]

To many of the reformers it was clear that the way to run a school system was the way to run a railroad -- or a bank, or U.S. Steel, or Sears Roebuck, or the National Cash Register Company. Eagerly the centralizers seized on the corporate model of control as the appropriate means of decision-making in urban education. "This is a time when prodigious efforts are being exerted to concentrate interests managed by many under a system whereby they can be controlled by one corporate authority," said Harvey H. Hubbert, an elite member of the Philadelphia board of education. Not only commerce and industry but also "religious and moral movements are being combined in vast organizations, under one executive head ...." It was only natural to apply this principle of corporate consolidation to education, he argued.[33]

Indeed, it was an age of consolidation. The capitalization of corporations valued at a million dollars or more jumped from 170 million dollars in 1897 to five billion in 1900 to more than twenty billion in 1904. Many of the men who supported the centralization of schools had helped to shape that corporate model and to build the trusts. The same corporate model of expert, centralized administration would serve other organizations equally well: universities, churches, the city manager form of government, welfare services, public schools, philanthropy, and other organizations affected with the public interest. Gone was the commitment of most business leaders to Herbert Spencer's doctrine of minimal government and the tradition of laissez-faire, within which Toulmin Smith could define "centralization" as "that system of government under which the smallest number of minds, and those knowing the least, and having the fewest opportunities of knowing it ... and having the smallest interest in its well-working, have the management over it, or control over it." The New York lawyer Stephen Olin argued that ward control of education was "primitive," a relic of the days when each neighborhood had its own watchman and volunteer fireman. "Mulberry Bend may not control its own police, nor Murray Hill assess its own taxes, nor Hell's Kitchen select its own health inspectors." No, the day had come to "organize on a modern and rational plan our great and costly system of public schools."[34]

To many schoolmen the corporate model of school governance was not only "modern and rational" but the answer to many of their biggest problems. They wished to gain high status for the superintendent -- and here he was compared with that prestigious figure, the business executive. They were tired of "politics" which endangered their tenure and sabotaged their attempts to improve the system -- and here was a board that promised to be "above politics." They wanted to make of school administration a science -- and here was a ready-to-use body of literature on business efficiency to adapt to the schools. The administrative progressives were quick to develop the implications of the corporate model and to anticipate possible objections to it on democratic grounds. Whereas in the past they often used loose factory analogies for the public schools, they were now quite precise in drawing a strict parallel between the governance of business corporations and schools.[35]

The relation of a board of education to its superintendent should not differ in theory and in fact from the relation which the board of directors of an incorporated manufacturing or other commercial enterprise sustains to its superintendent," said school board member William S. Mack of Aurora, Illinois in 1896. "The fact that one has to do with public and the other with private affairs is of no consequence as affecting the relations between the board of administration and its executive officer." Because the superintendent is the expert, the board's "responsibility to the people and to the children of the people require that it take the judgment of its paid professional executive and advisor on all questions relating to the strictly educational affairs of the school." An NEA Committee on the organization of city school systems admitted that some people might regard such centralization as "unwisely taking away power from the people." They argued, however, that making some one person accountable actually made the schools more efficient -- and hence more responsive -- than when authority is diffused.[36]

Educational administrators drew elaborate comparisons between the roles of business leaders and superintendents. In the Denver school survey in 1916 Professor Franklin Bobbitt of the University of Chicago summarized "the principles of good management" in two columns, one for a manufacturing company employing 1,200 and the other for a system of the same size. In his detailed comparison, citizens became stockholders, the superintendent of schools the manager who divides up the functions of the organization and chooses staff, while "the superintendent and his corps ... do the work according to the plans and specifications approved by the board." At the end Bobbitt concluded that "when it is asserted that educational management must in its general outlines be different from good business management, it can be shown from such a parallel study that there is absolutely no validity to the contention. All kinds of organizations, whether commercial, civic, industrial, governmental, educational, or other, are all equally and irrevocably subject to the same general laws of good management." In his survey of the San Francisco Schools, the U.S. Commissioner of Education Philander Claxton reproduced Bobbitt's chart verbatim.[37]

In 1917 an educator, William Theisen, argued that educational administrators should emulate the patterns of centralized organization to be found in city manager plans and in eight business firms he examined in detail: Pennsylvania Railroad Company, New York Telephone Company, American Telephone and Telegraph Company, New York Central Railroad, John Wanamaker, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, R.H.Macy and Company, and Park and Tilford Stores. The lessons these organization taught Theisen were these:

1. "A wide scope of authority is given to the chief executive ....
2. ... Responsibility for results is centered in the chief executive. The board of control retires from active administration but retains active control through the budget ....
3. In matters of policy the board of control demands that the chief executive and his assistants shall take the initiative."[38]

The movement to institute the corporate model of school politics spread rapidly. In many ways the key element in the new model was the power of the superintendent to influence major decisions of the school board. In 1901 a Massachusetts schoolman surveyed practices in 233 towns and cities in his state. He found that superintendents were gaining duties formerly handled by the school board, though the prerogatives of the school managers were by no means firmly established. With but few exceptions superintendents had the power to design a course of study, call and conduct teachers meetings, promote pupils, and inspect and direct the work of teachers. In 92 of the systems they had full control over the selection of textbooks, in 95 over the nomination of teachers. But the appointment and dismissal of teachers was still firmly in the board's hands, although superintendents were gaining greater advisory powers and in about 60 towns had joint responsibility. A study of the duties of school superintendents in 1923 indicated that the managers were continuing to win power to initiate board actions on such crucial decisions as hiring of staff, determining new educational policies, firing staff, and determining the scope of the curriculum and selection of textbooks.[39]

Manuals for school board members, textbooks on administration, and informal "education" of board members reinforced the norms of behavior appropriate to the "board of directors" style of governance. Edgar Mendenhall's The City School Board Member and His Task repeated the by-now familiar cliches:

> Q.3 -- SHOULD THE MAN SEEK THE OFFICE ... OR SHOULD THE OFFICE SEEK THE MAN?
>
> Usually the best type of School Board Members do not actively seek the office.

Q.4 -- HOW MAY A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER BE WISELY GUIDED IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS DUTIES?

(a) By consulting the school laws.
(b) By reading journals and books which discuss the problems of school administration.
(c) By consulting frequently with the Superintendent.

He went on to present the usual list of virtues of a desirable school board member: the successful man, "progressive" in sentiment but of "sound business judgment," representative of "the interests of the entire community and not those of a particular group." The ideal board was gentlemanly and businesslike -- qualities most likely to be found in gentlemen of business. Meetings of the board were to be brief, free of "oratory," and shaped by an agenda in which the superintendent had the primary initiative.[40]

One of the biggest differences between the behavior of the old large boards and the new small ones, the reformers reported, was that members no longer spoke to the galleries of workers for particular constituents. A businessman who served for fourteen years as chairman of the Kansas City, Missouri board of education prided himself on never making a speech in all that time. "We should act in the same manner as we do in our counting houses, offices, and shops," he said. "The work of the board, wrote the Boston superintendent after the committee was reduced to five in 1905, "is conducted in a conversational tone; speeches made for political effect that were common in the larger board no longer are delivered. The deliberations of the board are not essentially different from those of a board of directors." Ellwood Cubberley believed that "if the board confines itself to its proper work, an hour a week will transact all of the school bueiness which the board should handle. There is no more need for oratory in the conduct of a school system than there would be in the conduct of a national bank." Superintendent Ben Blewitt of St. Louis told the Chicago City Council that under the school charter that conferred most powers of initiation to him, the school board often completed its work in about twenty minutes. Repeatedly the theorists who urged the corporate model of school administration presented conflicts of value, debate, and representation of the interests of special groups as "inefficient" and unnecessary in a properly functioning system of governance. One president prided himself on the fact that all decisions of the board were unanimous in his city, adding that "in the transaction of [school] business it is very rare that a principle is involved, for, as a rule, it is usually a question of the best method.[41]

What, then, was the need for a board of education at all if the professional experts were to initiate most policies and to have a free hand in administering the schools? As Professor of Government at

Harvard and a frustrated member of an unreconstructed Boston School Board, Abbott Lawrence Lowell admired expertise but felt that even professionals might lose "the sense of perspective." Universities and hospitals find it useful "to bring to bear on questions of general policy the good sense of outsiders or laymen." So, too, urban schools. And since "gusts of discontent ... ruffle all democracies from time to time," Lowell wrote, it also helps to have a board "to act as a buffer between the professional force and the public -- a body that sanctions the acts of the experts and assumes the responsibility for them." The efficiency expert, Leonard Ayres, agreed that a board might "keep the professional schoolman from exceeding the educational speed limit" and said that the status of its members in the community could legitimize the actions of the superintendent.[42]

Wallace Sayre has observed that an educational bureaucracy -- like other large organizations -- "works persistently towards stabilizing its relationship to each of the other elements in its field of forces in ways that will maximize its own autonomous role." As we have seen, during the nineteenth century the politics of urban schools -- and especially the ward system -- disrupted professional autonomy. During the years from 1890 to 1920, however, the administrative progressives and their lay allies developed an ideology that served to protect the schools from such an external "field of forces." Sayre has described the "body of doctrine, a set of serviceable myths" which they propounded:

> 1. Education is a unique governmental function requiring unique constitutional, statutory, political, and administrative arrangements ....
>
> 2. Education is such a unique function and mission that the members of the profession must be trained in their own separate institutions, set apart from the training of other groups....
>
> 3. Educators are the only proper guardians of the educational function; their autonomy in this guardianship is essential to the public interest ....
>
> 4. The community, when it confronts educational questions, should not be an unstructured audience of citizens. These citizens should not be influenced in their responses to educational questions by their structured associations or organizations: not as members of interest groups of any kind (save perhaps in parents' groups) or as members of a political party ....

5. The unstructured community will be wisest in its responses to educational questions when it listens to the educators, to the "experts" in education ....

6. Education must be "taken out of politics" because political parties and politicians are institutions not to be trusted ....[43]

In urging the corporate form of external school governance and internal control by expert bureaucrats, the centralizers were, of course, simply exchanging one form of "political" decision-making for another. They were arguing for a relatively closed system of politics in which power and initiative flowed from the top down and administrative law or system took the place of decisions by elected officials. They wished to destroy the give-and-take bargaining of the ward system, the active lay influence through subcommittees of the board, the contests over symbolic and tangible values that had characterized the pluralistic politics of many large cities. Instead, they wished to centralize control and differentiate functions over a large geographical area in a "modern and rational" bureaucracy buffered from popular vagaries. As Samuel Hays writes, such consolidation and systematization of decision-making "was closely related to professionalization .... The scope of interest of the professional concerned with such matters as education, health, welfare, and public works was increasingly universal rather than parochial, increasingly cosmopolitan rather than local .... They found corporate models of decision-making to their liking, and they approved them not only because of their scope of coverage, but because of their coercive potential."[44]

In the generation following 1920 it was only a lonely maverick here and there in the educational establishment who dissented from Sayre's "serviceable myths" or the benefits of the corporate model. So familiar -- and seemingly so inevitable -- would centralized city bureaucracies become that many Americans would later forget the bitter contests of power and the conflict of values that had attended their origins.[45]

3. Conflicts of Power and Value: Case Studies of Centralization

Although there was a good deal of agreement on the principles of school reform among members of the interlocking directorate, the tactics and consequences of centralization differed city by city. For that reason, in this section I shall analyze the process of centralization in four cities at different points of time: the abolition of ward boards in New York in 1896, the centralist reforms of 1905 in Philadelphia, charter revision in St. Louis in 1897, and the introduction of the corporate model of school governance in San Francisco in the 1920's. Running through these episodes is a common theme with some local variations. In each case, the proponents of reform were members of highly educated civic elites who believed that structural reforms were necessary to create efficient, rational, and "non-political" school bureaucracies. The opponents of centralization tended to be those who had a political or occupational stake in the system or who tended to see the reformers as snobbish intruders. In New York and San Francisco, in particular, the centralizers managed to alienate a large proportion of the teachers by their publicity and tactics. In all of the cities, some lower or middle class ethnic groups such as the Irish spoke out against the "aristocratic" premises of the reformers.[46]

Specific political strategies and tactics depended much on the local political context. In New York, Philadelphia and St. Louis, the reformers went to respective state governments for enabling legislation, whereas in San Francisco they had to appeal to the voters of the city to amend the charter. Thus in each case, but San Francisco, there was a complex interplay of state and city politics. Although the New York bill was ostensibly non-partisan, its advocates widely proclaimed it as part of a war on Tammany Hall. In Philadelphia, the temporary alliance of patrician reformers with a boss, William Vare, helped to secure the passage of their measure through the Republican Pennsylvania legislature. St. Louis reformers relied on a Democratic Missouri government to secure their charter revision for a city where the political machine belonged to the Republicans. Although the tactics and consequences of the reforms varied from city to city, in each case the central ideology and central strategy were similar, marking these episodes as part of a nationwide "progressive" campaign, part of an organizational revolution which had earlier transformed other sectors of American life and which now was reshaping urban education.[49]

3.1 New York

The abolition of the powers of the ward boards of education in 1896 was only one battle in a long campaign to centralize control of the New York schools. This struggle began with reform plans in the 1880's and finally culminated in a seven-man board for greater New York in 1917. But the contest in 1896 was in some respects the most critical, for it destroyed the decentralized power which had sustained a grass roots lay influence in the schools.[48]

David Hammack has made a careful study of the alignment of social groups advocating and opposing centralization during this "school war" of 1896. The coalition that supported the bill to abolish the ward boards was composed, he writes, of "three overlapping elites: aggressive modernizers from business and the professions, advocates of efficient, non-partisan municipal government, and moral reformers determined to uphold Protestant virtues in polyglot New York City." Individuals from these elites had been active in previous campaigns for educational reform in groups like the Good Government Clubs, the Public Education Association, and the Educational Commission appointed by Mayor Gilroy in 1893 to make a blueprint for modernizing the schools. In 1896, Nicholas Murray Butler and Steven Olin organized a "Committee of 100" to arouse support in the city and in the legislature for the centralization bill. While Butler and his fellow political strategists did the day-by-day work of steering the bill through legislature, the membership of the Committee of 100 gave financial support, publicity, and the weight of its collective prestige to the campaign.[49]

The Committee of 100 (actually 104 members) contained a remarkable cross-section of the city's leaders in corporate business, the professions, and "society." Ninety-two were listed in the 1896 Social Register, and almost all lived in fashionable neighborhoods like Fifth Avenue or Grammercy Park. Graduates of leading colleges and universities, they commonly belonged to elite social and philanthropic organizations. Forty-nine were lawyers, mostly in corporate practice. In addition, eighteen bankers and a handful of merchants and manufacturers joined the committee. "This business elite located its offices as carefully as its homes," remarks Hammack: "Nearly everyone of the sixty-seven bankers and lawyers had an office on Wall, Nassau, Pine, William, Broad, or lower Broadway Streets." Highly successful men in other professions -- doctors, professors and university administrators, editors, and "professional spokesmen for genteel culture" like Clarence Steadman -- rounded out the committee. Taken as a group, these were men at the top of the New York economic and social pyramid, people who had consolidated and modernized business corporations, reorganized and led the professions, shaped public opinions through publications, redirected the functions of universities and constituted a "self-conscious" society -- in short, looked at the urban world from the top down confident in the value of centralized expert direction of modern organizations. Accustomed to broad and long range planning in their own organizations, and conscious that careful public investments paid off in public stability and predictability, they took an active interest in services such as police, roads, docks, mass transit -- and education.[50]

The members of the "Committee of 100" made a fetish of being "non-partisan" in local politics. Fifty-eight belonged to the City Club which had "made municipal 'non-partisanship' a principle to rank with the gold standard and civil service reform." Generally they despaired of controlling the party machinery of either the city Democrats or Republicans, for they represented a class numerically small though economically dominant. Instead, they sought to capitalize on their legal and organizational skill, anti-Tammany propaganda in the press, and an ideology of disinterested expertise and efficiency which they were trying to popularize. As Hammack writes, "their ideal of municipal order, like their conception of the social order, contained a persistent elitist strain." Through appointing experts and patricians to administrative offices and through destroying the power of political machines, they sought to increase their own political influence though purporting to be non-political.[51]

Butler cleverly adapted his techniques of persuasion to the audience, using snob power when he sent society ladies from the Public Education Association to call on Governor Morton's wife in Albany, or attacking incumbent Superintendent John Jasper of New York as an untrained "common man." In the newspapers, however, he insisted that the centralization movement was an uprising of the people against the Tammany machine. When an occasional opponent of centralization called its advocates "aristocrats and theorists, without any intimate knowledge of our public school system," one of Butler's group angrily replied that such a fomenter of "class distinction" was "an enemy of public peace, and either a fool or demagogue." The argument that one needs to know the system first-hand was silly, he said: "when the principles of pedagogy found useful in the 10th Ward can be distinguished from those indicated in the 20th, when the unfolding of the pupil's mind in the 3rd Ward presents different problems from that of the 6th, then, and not until then, let us continue Educational Subdivisions along Ward lines."[52]

In private, however, many reformers were willing, indeed eager, to make distinctions along lines of class, political party, and religion. In 1896, Mayor Strong was facing a decision whether to sign the bill abolishing the ward boards, supporters of the measure urged him to approve the bill in order to weaken Tammany Democrats and the Catholic Church. One advocate of abolishing ward boards argued that it was "not wise in a city like this so impregnated with foreign influence, languages and ideas that the school should be controlled locally; for in many localities, the influences that would control would be unquestionably un-American. In some districts there are vast throngs of foreigners where one scarcely hears a word of English spoken, where the mode of living is repugnant to every American." A merchant told Mayor Strong that the local trustee system might work well in uptown wards, but on the East side, people "are incapable of judging the efficiency" of the schools. In the slums "daily life ... is largely based upon the experience that a great many desirable things come through political influence, that this is the natural way of the world, and that it is useless to kick against it."[53]

Thus the immigrant poor were obviously unfit to manage their own educational affairs, according to the centralizers. As we have seen, many reformers thought little better of teachers and administrators; clearly they needed experts to tell them what to do.

Understandably, few teachers agreed with this assessment. One principal, however, wrote the mayor that most teachers performed in a "mechanical, unskilled and merely perfunctory' manner." If he were to write a history of the schools, it would have to be in four parts: "Chapter I. The System; Sham: Chapter II. The Method; Cram: Chapter III. The Result; Flam: Chapter IV. The Moral; Damn." Julia Richman, who later became famous as a progressive administrator, wrote in confidence to Strong that "we within the schools have no right to decide how we shall be governed. Have ... the employees of the Claflin Co. to say who shall be admitted to the firm?"[54]

Centralizers repeatedly used Julia Richman's analogy of corporate business: "Why should the schools be governed by a committee of people with so little educational knowledge as school trustees generally possess?" asked one businessman. "How long would a manufacturing interest thrive if its management were confided to a committee of the inhabitants of the Mill Village ...? If the education of the growing generation in this City is to be conducted so as to produce the best results in civilization, it seems to me that a paid expert organization is the only way to do it, just as we find in all other branches of human effort."[55]

In order to persuade the public of the need for reform, Butler and his allies claimed that the schools were miserable. The muckraker Jacob Riis wrote Mayor Strong that "a management which leaves 48,000 children ... to roam the street, deprived of school accomodation, sends truants to jail, and makes a laughing stock of the compulsory education law, is not fit to exist .... In common with all right-minded, public spirited citizens I pray that you will sign the bill...." In the legislative debate on the bill a Senator cited Joseph Riis's indictment of the New York Schools to prove that the results of instruction "were far below the standard attained in other cities; that the methods employed in the class-room were nothing short of 'dehumanizing'; that the whole system was not only antiquated but actually pernicious." Although he provided ammunition to the centralizers, Rice actually opposed granting one superintendent power over the whole school system of the city, believing instead that New York should be divided into twenty decentralized districts.[56]

The persons who defended the ward trustees and opposed the centralization bill were neither so eminent nor so well organized and financed as the reformers. In typical caricature, Butler described the critics of his bill as "a small clique of individuals who derive either prestige, power or patronage, from the existing system...." No such simple categorization of them as agents or dupes of Tammany will suffice, however. Hammack has isolated four main groups as vocal opponents of centralization: "business and community leaders from Harlem and the Bronx; Republican as well as Democratic party officials; some spokesmen for various Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities; and nearly everyone engaged in the operation of public schools, from teachers to School Commissioners." While the reformers had concentrated their rhetoric upon what Riis called "the battle against the slum," it was, as Hammack states, "the middle class areas which most vigorously opposed centralization." Defenders of the ward system resented the efforts of the "400" to run their schools. Their social perspective and scope of business was local, often linked with specific religious or ethnic communities, but they did not fear the pluralism of the larger society. In their willingness to accept the social diversity of the city and to give each group its political voice, they were in a sense more cosmopolitan than the educated nationally-oriented elite which wanted to make all children alike through efficient schooling. For many of the opponents of centralization, political parties were a means not only of achieving modest personal advance and influence but also of resolving or accommodating differences of value and power in a heterogeneous city. Hammack points out that the decentralized system of school governance, like political parties, "increased citizen participation in city government and thus helped to tie various groups together. No one called for a system of separate schools for the various religious and national groups. What they did demand was recognition of the integrity of each group's cultural heritage, and proportional representation of each group in the schools."[57]

Many laymen as well as teachers resented the reformers charges that the quality of education in the city was poor. A journalist wrote the mayor that she had come to New York expecting that the schools were miserable since Dr. Riis had portrayed them in such grim terms, and since the teachers had not risen "en masse to resent his open insult ... when they did not I thought that just possibly his statements were true ...." But when she visited a variety of schools, she "found exactly the reverse.... Not only intelligent and well-bred teachers who were doing their duty and doing it well, but [also] happy and well-trained children." Local control of schools guaranteed that educators would be responsive to the wishes of the community, said others, whereas the centralizers were mostly aristocrats who sent their children to private schools and based their criticisms of public schools on snobbery or misinformation. The school bill, said one opponent, "was born in aristocracy, sired by amateurs and damned by 'butterflies,' .... In approving the bill, the theories of the fashionable idler are endorsed. In disapproving it, the intelligence, experience and conscience of the faithful teacher is dignified."[58]

The centralizers won the school war of 1896 when Mayor Strong signed the bill abolishing the ward boards in April of that year. By September, however, Butler was gloomy, for the central board of education had frustrated his designs. The "men of education and of standing" on the board were outnumbered by the "political place hunters and looters" and by a third group of ignorant men who "would die at the stake sooner than harbor a new idea or favor any policy emanating from the enlightened part of the community." In league with these sinister and ignorant schoolboard members was John Jasper, Superintendent of Schools in New York since 1879, "one of the shrewdest and most far-sighted politicians in the city." To Butler, Jasper was the personification of the untrained superintendent who "has no conception of what modern theory and practice mean" -- in short, the type of leader which the university-educated new managers were to replace. "New York wants common schools for common people," declared an opponent of Butler on the board. "The superintendent ought to be a common man. Mr. Jasper is good enough for me." The elite who had pushed the centralization bill through the legislature, lobbied to have Daniel Coit Gilman, president of Johns Hopkins University, chosen as superintendent. But at the last moment, Gilman withdrew his name and Jasper was reelected by the board. Jasper then persuaded the board to employ fifteen assistant superintendents and ten supervisors who were largely his old cronies -- including all of the former assistant superintendents and two of the principals who had most strongly opposed the new bill.[59]

Clearly the battle for reform -- for centralization of control in a corporate board with delegation of power to experts -- was not over for Butler and his allies. An important step toward centralization came when William Maxwell became superintendent of schools in the five consolidated boroughs of New York in 1898. Adroitly, Maxwell exploited the weakness of an unwieldy and ineffectual board of 46 members and arrogated many of the powers to himself de facto. When a new charter reduced the size of the board to seven in 1917, most important decisions were already being made within the massive bureaucracy Maxwell had built. This was the crucial outcome of the contest of power and values in 1896: by destroying the network of local political control of schools through ward committees, the "school war" had created a vacuum of power and influence which the managers were ready and able to fill.[60]

3.2 Philadelphia

The Philadelphia school system of 1904 seemed to the muckraker Adele Shaw a classic case of corruption, selfishness, impoverished schools, intimidated teachers, and cheated children. In 1902, three board members went to jail for extorting bribes from teachers; the trial revealed that one teacher had paid $40 for three months out of her $47 salary, while another was told that $175 would arrange an appointment and transfer. While some of the ward politicians may have grown fat on school money, the school system itself was grossly undernourished. In 1903, the average cost per child per year in New York was $38.72, in Philadelphia, $22.54. Among major cities, Philadelphia ranked 43rd in salaries paid to women elementary teachers, although the city was 3rd in size. The average child in the public schools only went through four grades. But the worst harm of the system, said Shaw, "lies in the subjugation of the men and women of the teaching force -- in the object lesson before every growing boy and girl that pull is stronger than merit." Things would change only when Philadelphians would abandon, she wrote, "the old village prejudice and the tenacity of association that prefers to see in office a bad neighbor rather than a good man from a remoter street ...." But the full story was not so simple, of course, though the evils Marie Shaw and the other muckrakers exposed were genuine enough. The "old village prejudice and the tenacity of association" that helped to preserve the local boards represented not simply an archaic style of decisionmaking but an alternate view of urban life, one that was anathema to the modernizing elite which had sought since 1881 to change the politics of education in Philadelphia.[61]

As William Issel has shown in his analysis of school reform in Philadelphia, the individuals supporting centralization largely belonged to a civic elite. He has indicated that the following percentages of leaders in the centralization movement were listed either in the Philadelphia Blue Book or Social Register:

Officers of the Civic Club, 1904	100%
Delegation to Harrisburg Supporting 1891 Reorganization Bill	88%
Board of Public Education After 1905 Reorganization Act 1906	76%
Officers of the Public Education Association, 1882-1912	75%

By contrast, he cites the following percentages of persons active before centralization who were so listed:

Board of Public Education Before the 1905 Reorganization Act, 1904	47%
Delegation to Harrisburg Opposing 1891 Reorganization Act	27%
Ward Boards of Education Abolished by 1905 Reorganization Act, 1904	12%

"Upper class Philadelphians staffed the municipal and school reform organizations," he concludes "and advocated a similar set of goals for both City Hall and Board of Public Education: separation of municipal administration from state and local politics; centralization of power in the hands of a few nonpartisan experts; extension of civil service and scientific business administration methods."[62]

This local elite looked to other cities and to universities for reform leadership. In 1904 Charles W. Eliot presented a plan for structural change to the Public Education Association of Philadelphia and on various occasions Nicholas Murray Butler, G. Stanley Hall and William H. Maxwell also came to advise Philadelphia on its educational reorganization. Martin Brumbaugh, a professor of education at the University of Pennsylvania, was on the commission that wrote the Reorganization Act of 1905 and later became the first superintendent of Philadelphia schools under the new structure. The Philadelphia reformers were wiser than their peers in New York City in portraying teachers and principals as the unhappy victims rather than the inefficient allies of unscrupulous politicians. Thereby they enlisted the active support of many leading principals and teachers.[63]

It took the patrician reformers twenty years to bring about the reform of 1905. In the early 1880's, the Public Education Association allied itself closely with a group of upperclass reformers called the Committee of 100. There was remarkable continuity of purpose and social composition in this reform group from the Mugwump Era of the 1880's through the years of Mayor Rudolph Blankenburg's "progressive" administration from 1912-1916. The chief aims of this elite during those years was "to clean out corruption and institute a more efficient management of municipal affairs." Sam Bass Warner has observed that these reformers were mostly wealthy lawyers and businessmen who "turned participation in government into a philanthropic activity. These ... [men] carefully defined themselves as amateurs, helping out for a brief time, as if the municipal corporation were ordinarily someone else's affair, governing the institution of someone else's city." Reform of schools was linked closely with the reform of city government in general. In both cases, the patricians sought to change both the actors and the process in decision-making by changing the structure of governance.[64]

In 1885 the Public Education Association tried to destroy the ward boards, resolving that "all merely local and artificial divisions should be abolished both in the management of the schools and in the appointment of the members of the Board of Public Education, so that the interest of the whole community may always be kept in view ...." Such a "radical change" would vest essential power in the superintendent and his assistants, who would treat "the system of education ... as a unit, subdivided as convenience may require, and not as a mass of separate divisions, each independent of the other and subject to no common control ...." One of the elite reformers cited William T. Harris as critic of ward boards of education: They prevent the local school system from adopting the improved methods discovered in several cities of the country and foster a petty self-conceit on the part of the teachers of a community." Local divisions, then, were "artificial" to the cosmopolitan reformers urging the corporate model of school politics in Philadelphia.[65]

Local leadership and constituencies, however, were hardly "artificial" or undesirable to the majority of the members of the ward boards. When the Public Education Association and its allied Municipal League presented bills to the legislature in Harrisburg in 1891 and in 1895, they met strong opposition from the representatives of the local boards. In 1891 the reorganization bill sailed through the Senate with the support of the state and city machine leaders, who "were working to break the independent strength of the ward organizations." But the bill was killed in committee in the House, partly because of the pressures placed on Philadelphia legislators by the ward officials. In 1895 the major leaders within the Republican Party organization supported the reform bill, but once again the friends of the ward boards triumphed.[66]

A major spokesman for the opponents of centralization was the feisty William Taggart, who broadcast scorn of the reformers at the hearings in Harrisburg and in his newspaper, Taggart's Times. People are perfectly content with the schools, and all this fuss, he said, "does not represent the general demand or sentiment in this city." Instead, he claimed, "This bawling and whining about the 'degradation' and 'inefficiency' of our schools" comes mostly from the old maids in the Civic Club, from a handful of educational cranks, from the University clique which is anxious to please powerful advertisers." In part Taggart saw the reformers as people on the make -- and in pointing out the "University clique" as a group with something to gain from increased power, he was more accurate than those who claimed that the "experts" were totally disinterested. But Taggart also resented the reformers' snobbery: "The real object is an effort of the so-called social status people, who have no faith in the system of boilermakers, carpenters, painters -- in short the bone and sinew, as well as the good common sense element to be found among our mechanics as well as businessmen in all our wards -- to take a hand in the management of our public schools ...." Many of these centralizers, said another editor, were not educated in the public schools and don't even live in the city. Lower middle-class politicians especially resented upper-class women trying to tell them what to do. After a famous incident in which he insulted a reform school board member, Dora Keen, the boss of the 9th Ward told a newspaper reporter that "a woman must not come into the school board and expect to run things as it suits her. The men know as much about education as Miss Keen does .... They cannot be run by a woman in this ward. I'll see to that."[67]

Conviction of school directors for graft in 1903, coupled with forceful exposure of corruption in the city and in the schools in national magazines and local newspapers, helped to revive the reform movement. Centralizers transformed the stagnant Municipal League into a committee of 70 dedicated to "rescue Philadelphia from political degradation." This time some administrators and teachers in the schools joined the battle, fearful that "they were taking their educational lives in their hands." One sign that participation in the movement was indeed tricky is the fact that Superintendent Edward Brooks did not even mention in his annual report for 1903 the scandals that shook the schools during that year. The city political machine supported the school reformers, probably from a mixture of motives: to control the local ward politicians, to respond to the public demand for "honesty and efficiency," and to improve the system by opening new high schools. Likewise the state leaders favored a bill proposed by the school reorganization commission, and the measure passed the legislature with but one dissenting vote.[68]

The new law abolished practically all the powers of the ward boards and reduced the central board by half to twenty-one members, appointed by judges and chosen from the city at large rather than by ward. The reforms were a victory for the conception of public education advanced for over a generation by patrician reformers and educational experts. The new system replaced the personal political loyalties and local perspectives of the ward leaders and paved the way for a new pattern of corporate decisionmaking and bureaucratic organization. It was, said the jubilant reformers, "Philadelphia's revolution of 1905." But like all revolutions, it would bring new problems of its own when the bureaucratized and massive school system later failed to respond to the changing needs and character of the Philadelphia population during the twentieth century.[69]

3.3 St. Louis

Like Philadelphia and New York, St. Louis went through a familiar cycle of exposure of corruption and inefficiency by muckrakers, a call for a better "class of men" in office by elite civic groups, and a successful appeal to the state legislature to change the structure of control of the city's schools. In preparing the bill of 1897 that reorganized the school system, the St. Louis' reformers borrowed liberally from the recommendations of Mayor Gilroy's Commission in New York City, from the experience of Cleveland where a small elite group centralized the system of control, and from the recommendations of the NEA Committee of 15 on the governance of city schools. In turn, St. Louis pattern of administration became a model for other cities.[70]

An abortive attempt at reform in 1887 taught the centralizers that it was not sufficient simply to devise ways of getting good men into office; it was also essential to create a structure that would prevent bad men from doing harm. Reformers had backed a law in 1887 which reduced the school board from 28, elected by wards, to 21, with 7 elected at large and 14 by wards. The revised board of 1887 included 17 of a slate of 21 nominees of a reformer's "citizen's ticket."

In comparison with a board for 1886, it represented, Elinor Gersman found, a marked increase in social prominence as measured by education, occupation, listing in Gould's Blue Book or honorific biographies, and residence in fashionable neighborhoods. But by 1896, the Republican city machine found it easy to regain control of the school board. The Republican Convention of that year passed a resolution requiring "all candidates nominated ... to enter a caucus of the Republican members of the School Board and be guided by the decision of the caucus in matters pertaining to the shaping of the public school system ...." What this party discipline meant became clear when Henry Bus became president of the school board. Bus was a party regular whose philosophy of service he phrased thus: "I always take care of my friends. I care nothing for my enemies. When a man votes with me, I take care of him." Bus resigned as paid deputy sheriff to serve on the school board, adding substance to the saying of another member that the school board position was worth $5000 a year. The opportunities for school graft were immense to a man of large imagination and no scruples. By the time the civic reformers had contested an underhanded heating contract in court, for example, the equipment was already installed. Finally the courts caught up with Bus and his allies from the Republican caucus: eight of them were jailed and fined for rigging a school election.[71]

Confronted with such corruption, the elite reformers realized that they had to devise not only better election procedures, but also to restrict board functions. The elite members of the St. Louis civic federation found willing allies in the Democratic Missouri legislature, since both were eager to curb the power and spoils of the city Republican machine. In 1897 the legislature passed a new charter which prescribed strict standards of eligibility and conduct for school boards members: each of the twelve board members had to swear an oath of political nonpartisanship and to declare that "he will not be influenced, during his term of office, by any consideration except that of merit and fitness, in the appointment of officers and the engagement of employees"; he was forbidden to hold any other concurrent office; and he was prohibited from voting on any contracts in which he had a financial interest. The chief purpose of the charter, said Edward C. Eliot, a key reformer, was to take "the schools ... out of politics" and to persuade "men of standing and position in the community to accept this duty as a public trust."[72]

As Elinor Gersman has shown, "men of standing and position" did in fact become school board members. Here are some comparative percentages of the pre-reform board in 1896 and the post-charter board of 1897:

	1896	1897
Listed in Gould's Blue Book	33	75
Had some higher education	4.8	66.6
Mentioned in honorific biographies	9.5	58.3
West end residence	19.1	41.7
Occupations:		
Employees	28.6	0
Small business	47.6	16.7
Big business	9.5	25
Professional	4.8	58.3
Occupation unknown	4.8	0

In 1903, Edward Eliot reported that members of the board continued to enjoy high status: "three lawyers of high standing; three businessmen at the head of their respective occupations; two civil engineers, one of whom has a national reputation; a physician; the manager of the leading German newspaper in St. Louis ...; a retired railroad capitalist ...; and last, but not least, Dr. C. M. Woodward, Director of Manual Training School, and Dean of the School of Engineering and Architecture of Washington University." In 1916, Eliot reassured the Chicago Merchants Club that the right people were still in control of the St. Louis schools.[73]

In retrospect, the St. Louis reforms were important not so much for making school board membership attractive to "men of standing" as for greatly expanding the power of the superintendent. Indeed, critics of the new charter accused the new superintendent under the new plan, Louis Soldan, of having conspired with the Civic Federation members to create an autocratic regime: "Soldan is supreme. He is a pedagogic Pope, absolutely infallible, unamenable to anyone or anything ...." In fact, the superintendent did have enormous power of initiative in virtually all matters concerning the schools: the appointment of staff, the selection of textbooks, plans and contracts for buildings, the determination of the curriculum, and normal decisions about everyday running of the schools. "What is left for the school board to do?" asked Edward Eliot. "The answer is: Only those things which lie within the qualifications of men of general intelligence and business ability, not experts in education or construction." In Eliot's view, running schools was a task for experts, while policy questions were few and far between. The superintendent distributed a printed agenda in advance, and the board disposed of it expeditiously. Now and then a board might reject a recommendation of a superintendent, but it was not the business of a member to initiate anything.[74]

During the 1890's, some of the national spokesmen for centralization had suggested actually *eliminating* the school board entirely, the acme of power to the professional. The St. Louis reformers settled for the next best thing: hedging the board and liberating the school manager. They justified this transfer of power not only as a means of eliminating political corruption, but also as an opportunity for expertise and charismatic leadership. Like progressives elsewhere, the St. Louis reformers blended "science" with evangelism, organizational savvy, with Horatio Alger mythology. If you give a superintendent full and complete responsibility, Edward Eliot told schoolmen at the NEA in 1905, "Under such a system great men could be developed. A railroad president of the highest rank who has attained a leading position while still quite young in years, said to me a short time ago that no one knows what a man can do until he is given the opportunity. It was the principle on which his success had been attained." Similar exhortations permeated the early literature on school administration: the leader was not only the trained expert, but the free ranging creator, the crusader who inspired his organizational followers. Was the superintendent a man on a white horse or a man on one end of a telephone? If the qualities of charisma and scientific expertise today seem antithetical, or at least jarring when linked together, it is perhaps because it is apparent today how men become shaped by the organizations they inhabit and because it seems increasingly difficult for a single person to transform a bureaucracy. But in the early twentieth century the faith of patricians in the charismatic and scientific captain of education mirrored their faith in the captains of industry and finance who were transforming the corporate economy.[75]

3.4 San Francisco

A charismatic man, Alfred Roncovieri faced a hostile audience when he talked to the Commonwealth Club of California on November 14, 1917. The elected superintendent of schools of San Francisco since 1906, Roncovieri realized that not only his position but his whole conception of school politics in a pluralistic city were under attack in this gathering of elite business and professional men and their wives. U.S. Commissioner of Education, P.P. Claxton, had just completed a survey of the city schools -- largely at the invitation of influential laymen -- and had concluded that the city should adopt the closed system of the corporate model of school governance. To Roncovieri that represented a repudiation of "our splendid progressive San Francisco system of direct government by the people." It was the right of the people, he said, "to choose their superintendent of schools, the one public official who, through their children, comes nearest to their homes and firesides." In answer to those who claimed that an elected superintendent would necessarily clash with the members of the school board, he replied: "After all, from the clash of ideas among public officials the people get light. It will not do to have too much harmony among public officials." He had been elected, and reelected, he said, because he knew what the parents wanted -- had he not listened to them, and addressed them in French and Italian in their colonies? -- What citizens wanted, and what the teachers gave them, was "honest school work," upholding "the standards of manners, of morals and of real work," not "fads" and "pedagogical experiments" or "showy effects." Differences of opinion there must be in a cosmopolitan city, but the proper way to resolve these was by the give and take of rule by the people, not by edict from the top down.[76]

Until the long tenure of Superintendent Roncovieri -- which would stretch from 1906 to 1923 -- the normal condition of San Francisco school politics had been conflict and instability. In the fifty-three years prior to 1906 there had been twenty-one superintendents (three appointed and eighteen elected). Religious and ethnic disputes, labor-management conflict, partisan political battles, and machine politics intersected in a tangled web. Party conventions nominated partisan candidates for school board and superintendent, regarding the schools as part of the patronage system. From an office in city hall the elected superintendents collected statistics and wrote reports which frankly exposed the wrong-doings of fellow schoolmen of the opposite party. Boss rule, an invisible government often dominated by the Southern Pacific Railroad, became the normal form of city government, and only a few educators -- notably John Swett -- fought the political rings.[77]

Urban reformers had tried unsuccessfully in 1883, 1887, and 1895 to change the charter under which the city ran its schools. In 1897 a citizens' "Committee of 100" invited one teacher delegate from each school to meet with them to discuss revisions in the governance of schools. The new charter was ratified in 1898 and went into effect in 1900; it attempted to locate full responsibility in the mayor for policies and appointments of staff and to separate "politics and administration." Patrician reformers were content with Mayor James D. Phelan, a wealthy conservative who ran an economy-minded administration from 1897 to 1902. Under the old form of city government powers had been so diffused among supervisors and other officials that it was hard to determine who was accountable. In theory, the new charter allowed voters to determine basic policies at the polls by voting for a strong mayor while the actual administration of the city's affairs would be in the hands of paid experts. Accordingly, the schools were to be run by a bi-partisan board of four directors, appointed by the mayor and each paid $3000 per year, together with an elected superintendent of schools who was an ex officio member of the board.[78]

Of the four school directors appointed the first year by the mayor, three had formerly been teachers and administrators in the San Francisco schools. As "experts," these board members deemed it their responsibility to set and administer policies on such wide-ranging matters as the course of study, the system of examinations and promotions, the training and selection of teachers, and the provision of playgrounds and specialized schools. Although school business was technically assigned to subcommittees, in practice each director tended to deal "directly with supervisors, principals, and teachers -- quite independent of the Superintendent's Office." Since the first superintendent elected under the new charter was a strong-minded man, and since duties of directors and superintendent were ill-defined, conflict over jurisdictions and power became routine.[79]

Although he thought the new regime infinitely preferable to the old corrupt one, Ellwood P. Cubberley found the San Francisco plan unacceptable: "the system is double-headed and certain to result in conflicts. The directors can hardly earn their salaries unless they assume duties which of right belong to the superintendent." An elected superintendent must be a local politician, while the job demanded the best trained person available anywhere in the nation. The board of education should be composed of unpaid businessmen who simply performed minimal "legislative work." The present plan was merely "a stage in the evolution of the city's educational system" toward the corporate model which lay ahead. What was needed now, said Cubberley, in 1901, was "an awkening of the better elements of the city's population .... If a few such clubs as the Merchants, the Unitarian, the California, the Century, and the Association of Collegiate Alumnae were to begin a serious study of the problems, ... it would in time work a revolution in the management of the public schools."[80]

Cubberley was prophetic, but the revolution took longer than he anticipated. In the spring of 1913 some members of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, bothered by complaints "that grammar school graduates do not fit into business and commercial houses," decided to organize a "School Survey Class" to study the schools. They invited school officials, education professors like Cubberley, and others to speak, and hired as official investigator Agnes de Lima, who would later win recognition as a publicist for progressive education. Mrs. Jesse H. Steinhart was the prime mover in the study and in later efforts to reform the governance of the schools. The Association then published a report in 1914 comparing school conditions in San Francisco with those "in other progressive communities" and found the local system sadly wanting. The city was spending far too little on its schools in relation to its tax base and expenditures for other services, resulting in obsolete buildings, crowded classrooms, and the lack of "progressive features." "Progressive features adopted in other cities are unknown in San Francisco, or scarcely begun, such as, -- kindergartens, vacation schools, school gardens, open-air schools, school lunches, physical training, special classes for defectives, trade schools, vocational guidance, continuation schools, social use of schoolhouse, etc." Since the schools failed to keep "adequate and scientific records and reports" on instruction and neglected "business methods" of administration, the group concluded, "intelligent school policy is at present impossible." "No bank could possibly do business for one hour which kept its accounts in the same fashion as San Francisco keeps her accounts of the 'invested capital of society' -- her children." The report did not advocate any change in the school board or the superintendency -- indeed, Roncovieri, who had been superintendent since 1906 had advocated many of the same educational innovations proposed by the Alumnae -- but it was clear to many observers that the lay reformers, once aroused, would not stop with piecemeal change.[81]

Within six months of the Survey the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and the San Francisco Public School Society began negotiating with U.S. Commissioner of Education Philander P. Claxton to conduct a thorough examination of the city's schools. The Board of Education was less than enthusiastic: it insisted on a veto power over any investigator suggested by the United States Bureau of Education and refused to pay anything for the report. The manager of the Chamber of Commerce raised the necessary funds through private subscription; the survey commission began its work in 1916. Claxton's chief policy recommendation -- to replace the "dual organization" of paid board members and an elected superintendent with the corporate model of control -- echoed Cubberley's contention of 1901 that "the system is double-headed and certain to result in conflicts." Indeed, Roncovieri contended that the Claxton study was "trite and general" and "that most of it could have been written without ... ever visiting San Francisco." Significantly, when Claxton wanted local citizens to verify data in the report, he submitted it not only to school officials but also to the president of the Chamber of Commerce and to Mrs. Steinhart.[82]

School governance was the crux of the argument that followed Claxton's report. To the system of "dual control" of paid board and elected superintendent Claxton attributed "such evils as may exist in the public-school system of San Francisco." Without a "proper official subordination" the teachers and administrators "are constantly in uncertainty as to whether they should regard the superintendent and his deputies or the board of education and its committees as their immediate official superiors." This ambiguity produced "unrest" both in schools and community. Roncovieri and his allies disagreed, claiming that Claxton's surveyors had formed their opinions not from observation of the schools but from conversations and correspondence with a "select few" outside the schools: "certain persons intent on discrediting our schools, and of placing responsibility for what is wrong and what is alleged to be wrong, on certain features of school government which only they desire to change, are using this unjust criticism to prejudice the minds of our citizens."[83]

The members of the local elite who brought in Claxton had reason to believe that he would propose the corporate model of school control, for that had become the conventional wisdom of professional leaders, while Roncovieri and San Francisco educators were out of step. Claxton produced little evidence to justify his charges of "evils" and "unrest," but he devoted eight pages of his report to quotations from experts on "Principles of School Organization and Management." Five of these pages he devoted to the elaborate analogy between schools and manufacturing corporations written by Franklin Bobbitt of the University of Chicago, concluding that "the principles of good management in the school world are identical with the principles of good management in the business world." Claxton also cited the principles of school governance adopted by the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association in 1917, which sharply circumscribed the role of board members and proposed "the safe analogy ... of the board of directors in a business corporation." Not surprisingly, this ideal appealed to the businessmen and leading professional men in the Commonwealth Club, who applauded the speaker who declared: "The citizens are the stockholders; the board of education are the directors; the superintendent is the technical expert and general manager."[84]

Roncovieri disagreed with the corporate model. A musician rather than a trained educator, a union member active in the Union Labor Party, he saw school politics as a matter of accommodation, controlled conflict, rather than a closed system. It is true that there have been disagreements between the board and the elected superintendent, he said: "Such disagreements were actually foreseen, if not actually desired, by the makers of the charter .... With a board which cannot remove the superintendent and a superintendent who cannot remove the board, it is obvious that the outcome of all differences is a full and free discussion and a final settling vote, and the people come into their own and learn the whole truth." He maintained that this was "the American way -- and it is a good way: -- the only way in which the people come into their knowledge of what is going on, which is clearly their right and due." Such shared responsibility and independence was not a liability but a virtue, Roncovieri argued, for it offered a balancing of power and multiple means of redress of problems.[85]

A pluralistic system of school control matched the pluralistic nature of the city's population, Roncovieri believed. Persons who taught during his years of office were often uncertain about just who was superintendent. "Some were quite positive that Roncovieri was 'just another board member,'" wrote Lee S. Dolson in his history of the San Francisco schools, "and that one of the actual members of the Board, who had been supervising their work was the 'real superintendent.'" Either board members or the superintendent might mediate the cultural conflicts that were bound to arise. A writer in the Catholic Monitor described how the system handled a request of a birth-control advocate to teach "sex hygiene" in the schools: "The school board handed her case to Mr. Roncovieri, who, like a gentleman, looked into her methods, and assembled several mothers' clubs to discuss the question .... The conclusion arrived at by the teachers, the superintendent, and the mothers' clubs, was that sex hygiene was no subject for children or a classroom, but must be reserved for the parents and the home."[86]

As an elected official, superintendent Roncovieri felt responsible to the entire citizenry, not simply to a business-dominated school board. He was sensitive to the wishes of labor unions, ethnic groups, and religious organizations. He rejected the idea that the purpose of the schools was simply to produce products desired by employers: "We are too prone to judge our children by adult standards. That is particularly true of business men, and it is not fair." In addition, the school should not "be held wholly responsible. The home and the church are just as great factors in the development of the boy's mentality and character." If foreign-born parents wanted their children to study their home language in the public school, that was legitimate.[87]

In 1918 and 1920 proponents of the corporate model of school governance mounted campaigns to persuade the electorate to change the charter by means of Amendment 37, a measure designed to abolish the elective superintendency and to institute an unpaid board of seven lay members appointed by the mayor. The issue provoked sharp class, ethnic, and religious conflict. In favor of Amendment 37 were many of the groups and individuals who had criticized the schools and had helped to invite Claxton: the Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, and the Commonwealth Club, now joined by other associations such as the San Francisco Center of the California Civic League, the San Francisco Real Estate Board, the City Federation of Women's Clubs, and other high-status organizations. Predominant among the sponsors of the Amendment were leading business and professional men and their wives, according to studies by Joanne Bosche and Victor Shradar. Their cry: take the schools out of politics, and run them efficiently. "The spirit of the age is expert leadership." A number of anti-Catholic individuals, convinced that Catholics were running the system, added fuel to the fire.[88]

Ranged against the corporate model of Amendment 37 were a variety of citizens: members of the Teachers' Association, spokesmen of some labor unions, Catholics, Irish, and apparently large numbers of "common men" who resented the drive for power by the elite organizations.

In contrast with the cosmopolitan perspective and experience of the elites, they tended to have a local or parochial point of view. In a letter to the Bulletin, Matthew Sullivan accused the advocates of trying "to dictate to the common people of San Francisco how they should manage their schools." The members of the Public Education Association, he wrote, are listed in the Blue Book, but where among the sponsors do you find laboring men or school people? Angered by charges that the employees of the district were political hacks and by the provision that board members could not be chosen from teachers, the San Francisco Teachers' Association protested "the libelous statements published in extravagant and numerous advertisements in the daily papers, paid for by secret influences interested in the passage of Amendment 37." Who were these people who contributed "so enormously to the political pot to take the schools from the people at large and turn them over to the investors in this great fund?" The newspaper of the building trades claimed that the proponents of the measure "believe the people are not intelligent enough to control directly their public schools. They urge that the 'direct control' ... be given to a 'superman' who, they claim, knows better the educational needs of the people than the people themselves ...." It declared that "an unsalaried school board ... means disfranchisement of the 'common people,' because the great mass of the common people are poor people, and consequently none of them could afford to become members of the school board." The whole affair, said a correspondent in the Monitor, "was conceived, born, and nursed in the Chamber of Commerce conspiracy; it is not the child of Claxton, and the baby that Mrs. Jesse Steinhart is now showing about in her big limousine is not her own, but another's darling." As soon as men from the Chamber of Commerce enter the board, they will hire "an Eastern, imported, high-salaried 'superintendent'" who will force teachers to "wear the Chamber of Commerce collar." An Irish newspaper contended that the amendment was "engineered by the hucksters, bigots, profiteers, uplifters, sex hygienists and birth controllers who pose as the intellectuals of San Francisco."[89]

When the amendment came to a vote in 1918 and in 1920, Irish districts voted against the measure by a large majority. The amendment failed to pass in 1918 -- possibly because of the extravagant publicity of the proponents -- but on the second time around it passed by a narrow margin. In addition to a resurgence of anti-Catholicism -- apparently part of a nationwide campaign -- two factors seem to have tipped the balance of votes in the 1920 election: the firing of a school principal, which advocates of Proposal 37 portrayed as a sign of corruption in the system; and the support by certain labor groups which apparently hoped to have some influence over vocational training in the schools. In any case, by November, 1920, Cubberley's prediction about a "revolution" in school governance finally came true.[90]

The groups which had actively promoted Amendment 37 now had access to power. Of the seven directors Mayor James Rolph appointed, three were members of the California Civic League; three were leaders of the Jewish community, which had provided much of the impetus behind the reform; and a majority were members of the business elite. After selecting an outside expert as superintendent -- Joseph Gwinn, Columbia-trained, who became President of the National Education Association the day he took up the San Francisco Superintendency -- the board and its manager were ready to translate their theories into practice. For symbolic as well as practical reasons they chose to move headquarters out of city hall into a new administrative building. Soon Gwinn and his cooperative board had set up a new table of organization, collected the multiple facts on which "scientific" education depended, built specialized schools and curricula, shifted the schools to a 6-3-3 plan which included junior high schools, tested and sorted children by IQ scores, and introduced the techniques of business management and modern instruction that were being developed in the university schools of education. Reform from the top down had opened the way for the administrative progressives to transform education in the city of San Francisco.[91]

4. Political Structure and Political Behavior

As we have seen, the administrative progressives in urban education put great faith in structural reforms. They believed that centralization and the corporate model would not only put successful men on school boards but would insure a rational and expert process of decision-making. They normally portrayed their struggle for structural reforms as a contest of unselfish and enlightened citizens against the forces of corruption, inefficiency, and ignorance. Often the rhetoric justifying the structural changes betrayed inconsistency or ambivalence. They praised the democratic purposes of public schooling but sought to remove the control of schools as far as possible from the people. They believed that education should be "scientific," yet their ethnocentrism blurred the line between fact and value when they looked at culturally different groups. Skeptical of social reformers or panaceas in other domains, and conservative in their public philosophy, they nonetheless maintained a utopian trust in progress through structural reforms in education.[92]

They sought structural changes both in the linkage of the schools with the outside community -- primarily through the school board -- and in the internal organization of the system. "Accountability" was a word they sometimes used to describe their goal; "bureaucracy" was a negative label they pinned on features of the system they wished to change. They deplored the way in which school systems were perforated with lay influences they regarded as extraneous

--ward committees, ethnic interest groups, subcommittees of the board, and patronage, for example. They wanted to seal the city schools off from these "political" forces by remodeling them on the business corporation in which supposedly influence entered at the top and percolated down rather than slipping in through perforations in the sides of the organization. Once the system was thus shielded, they thought, it would be possible to pin down responsibility within the organization and to give professionals autonomy within their individual spheres.[93]

When the administrative progressives used the word "bureaucracy," they seemed to mean roughly what Thomas Carlyle connoted when he coined the term in his phrase "the Continental nuisance called 'Bureaucracy.'" They meant qualities associated in most people's minds with large public organizations: bureaucrats were people tied up in their own red tape, eager to avoid responsibility, preoccupied with preserving their own position or power, or so constricted by rules that they could not exercise their professional judgment. The educational results of such traits were the lock-step routines of nineteenth-century urban schools. One educator said in 1894 that "in all cities, and most of all in large ones, the tendency toward machinery and bureaucracy is very strong in all kinds of work. It is hard for the individual to exert his force." In a survey of the New York schools in 1911, another reformer said that "the board of Superintendents has become bureaucratic, and hence non-progressive." Although these supervisors may once have been useful to induce "homogeneity and coherence--unity of aim and effort -- within the school system," they had become a block to "the initiation or development of educational policies" in a new era of functional specialization and "professional growth."[94]

What the structural reformers wanted to do, then, was to replace a rather mechanical form of public bureaucracy, which was permeated with "illegitimate" lay influence, with a streamlined "professional" bureaucracy in which lay control was carefully filtered through a corporate school board.

With their great trust in these structural changes, the administrative progressives were often blind to the ways in which older forms of political behavior -- both external to the system and internal, among the employees -- could creep back into the remodeled structures. They were not aware, often, that astute school managers, like superintendent Edwin J. Cooley of Chicago, could change the decisionmaking process without structural changes. Also, sometimes the approved changes in structure, as in Chicago in 1917, could turn school governance into a nightmare if political conditions were wrong. In their schema there was little possibility of accommodation between "party bosses" and the benign reform of centralization of control of schools, yet such marriages occurred -- for example, in Boston Mayor

James Michael Curley found a small and centralized board of education a great convenience when he built his machine. And finally, many of the reformers underestimated the potential for conflict between a superintendent with nearly autocratic powers and his school board, on the one hand, and his staff, on the other. Some of these complex interactions between political structure and political behavior illustrate a problem perennial in educational reform, namely the lure of the structural panacea and the bane of unintended consequences in behavior.[95]

In Chicago the administrative progressives took more than two decades -- until 1917 -- to enact their notions of centralization, and then the reforms boomeranged. Not that the Chicagoans lacked proper advice and assistance from the interlocking directorate. In the 1890's groups like the Civic Federation, the Municipal Voters League, and the Public School Committee (formed in response to Rice's expose of the Chicago schools) looked to other city's plans and experience in structural reform. In 1899 the mayor's Educational Commission under the chairmanship of President William Rainey Harper of the University of Chicago proposed the standard centralist changes -- small board, strong superintendent, and the rest -- and quoted as authorities the familiar roster of Philbrick, Eliot, Draper, Maxwell, Harris, Butler and forty-four other consultants. In 1906 three elite reformers came to Chicago to tell the Merchants' Club how and what to reform -- Edward C. Eliot, a member of the new St. Louis board; James Storrow, patrician who had been prime mover in the Boston reforms the year before; and the peripatetic Nicholas Murray Butler. In 1916 a subcommittee of the city council heard advice from experts Charles Judd of the University of Chicago, Leonard Ayres of the Russell Sage Foundation, and superintendents Ben Blewitt of St. Louis, Charles Chadsey of Detroit, Frank Spaulding of Minneapolis. The remarkable uniformity of opinion from all these men indicated that within the directorate groupthink prevailed.[96]

In the state legislature at Springfield elite leaders in the civic organizations and their professional allies introduced bills to enact the Harper recommendations in 1899, 1901, 1903, and 1905. Not until 1917 would a centralization bill pass (it reduced the board from twenty-one to eleven members and legally defined increased powers for the superintendent). The scrappy head of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, Margaret Haley, led the assault on the Harper bill in the legislature. She and many of her followers distrusted Harper, who as a member of the school board in 1898 had voted against pay raises and who was, they feared, trying to create a monopoly of teacher training for his department of education at the University of Chicago. Critics of Harper said that he sought "an educational trust" comparable to the Standard Oil of his benefactor, John D. Rockefeller. The woman teachers also resented the suggestion in the Harper report that many of the teachers were incompetent and that male teachers should be attracted by paying them higher salaries. But most of all they distrusted giving "one-man power" to a superintendent. Haley believed that an "educational factory system" was turning the teacher into "an automaton, a mere factory hand"; to give superintendents more authority could only make the situation sorse. Teachers were understandably upset that Harper suggested paying the superintendent $10,000 at a time when the top teachers' salary was $800.[97]

Failing new legislation, the structural reformers in Chicago sought to change the system by hiring a new superintendent. Butler expressed the belief of many reformers when he told the Chicago merchants that "the greatest force in this world is the force of personal example; and the best school systems that we have had in America have had some great, strong, vigorous human personality to look up to ...." The reformers' first experiment in charisma was E. Benjamin Andrews, president of Brown University, who replaced Albert Lane as superintendent in 1898 (Harper, then on the board of education, thought Lane lacked formal education; Andrews, who had been president at Denison University when Harper was a professor there, Harper acknowledged as his "intellectual father"). But Andrews failed the test. Teachers came to know him as autocratic "Bulletin Ben," who sent them countless directives including one telling them not to criticize their superiors. The school board was annoyed when Andrews insisted on "sitting in the front row at its meetings and speaking without being spoken to," Mary Herrick wrote; "the jungle of local politics in Chicago was no place for an academician who expected his ideas to be accepted with all due respect to his office and to his learning." Andrews got his walking papers in 1900.[98]

The next superintendent, Edwin Cooley, succeeded in carrying out many of the purposes of the administrative progressives even though he continued to operate under the old structures of governance. When Cooley accepted the position as superintendent in Chicago, he declared "I will go in as an educator, and not as a politician." That was a politic thing to say, and when Cooley's admirers praised him they spoke of his "unusual tact and administrative diplomacy." Diplomat or politician, Cooley knew how to gain and use power to obtain the results sought by structural reform without the formal reorganization. In 1902 a newspaper reporter wrote that Cooley "had no rainbow theories about school boards. He knew that a board of twenty-one members, appointed by a mayor largely to accommodate certain geographical, racial, and political considerations, could have no great veneration for educational theories, nor could it be expected to regard the superintendent as an infallible autocrat in school affairs." Cooley knew that most of the important decisions took place in the subcommittee sessions rather than in the full board meetings which tended to ratify their decisions and make a show of policy discussion about other matters. Accordingly, Cooley went first to the subcommittees to present a proposal -- and if they disagreed might raise the same issue again in that committee or another -- and with this groundwork he won "every proposition" submitted to the board. He gained greater control over the appointment and retention of teachers by making wry use of a resolution passed by the board itself, directing him to "report all political efforts to influence his recommendations." When Cooley announced at an open meeting that eight board members had tried to influence his nominations of teachers, he could hardly be faulted for following orders.[99]

In 1917 the legislature finally passed a bill cutting the board from twenty-one to eleven, providing for appointment of the board by the ~~mayor,~~ defining duties of board and superintendent, giving the superintendent a four-year term, and granting tenure to teachers (which was the main reason the teachers supported the measure). Then came not the "non-political" and rational efficiency sought by the reformers but first anarchy and then boss rule and corruption. William Thompson, who later gained national notoriety for threatening to punch King George in the snoot, was in city hall when the task of appointing the eleven new school board members fell to the mayor in June, 1917. Although the common council failed to approve his nominations, his board took over the board rooms and appointed a new business manager and attorney. A year later a court reinstated the old board of twenty-one as the legal governing body, and until October, 1919, when the council approved Thompson's new eleven nominees of that year, there was not a legally unquestioned board of education. In the spring of 1919 the board of twenty-one members appointed Charles Chadsey as superintendent, but Thompson's board locked him out of his office and appointed Peter Mortenson as their superintendent. Although a court found six members of the Thompson board guilty of conspiracy in denying Chadsey his legal position, and implicated Mortenson in their actions, Mortenson was reappointed. With his own board and their man as boss of the schools Thompson's machine then proceeded to rake graft from the sale of school sites, equipment, and jobs. The custodial engineers, who were key figures in the network of boodle, raised a slush fund of $90,000 for a board member after an increase in their salaries in 1920. In 1921 the board spent $8,714,065 on"incidentals," including "phonographs costing the board $187 each, dear at $40," and unwanted equipment by the carload while teachers had to buy necessary materials out of their own pockets. After a grand jury investigation made such corruption public in 1922, Mayor Thompson lost the election to William Dever, who promised to take the schools out of politics and appointed starchy William McAndrew as superintendent. But four years later, Thompson won again in a campaign which made McAndrew's alleged pro-British sympathies and autocratic traits a prime issue; he then fired McAndrew and resumed his quest for patronage and rake-offs. To please his ethnic constituencies he urged schools to teach children

Irish, German, Polish and other ethnic heroes, and his board hired relatively large numbers of black citizens as teachers and non-professional employees.[100]

Although structural reformers argued that the centralized corporate model could free the schools from the clutches of bosses like Thompson, in practice there was no reason why machines could not take over centralized school systems. Some bosses prided themselves on a hands-off policy, of course, and the insulated character of the corporate model made it possible to designate the schools as off limits precisely if one so chose. Boss William Vare of Philadelphia declared himself "an ardent champion" of the school code "which divorced the schools entirely from politics," boasting that the city "is a great center of education and its school laws are as good as those of any municipality in America." He even urged the nomination and helped secure the election of Martin Brumbaugh as Governor of Pennsylvania, he wrote, because of his "splendid success as the Superintendent of Schools of Philadelphia." Similarly, Boss Cox of Cincinnati "boasted that he had taken the schools and the police departments out of politics." But in Boston, in 1931, in a time when jobs for the faithful were scarce and profits from patronage alluring, Mayor James Michael Curley found it easy to capture the five-person "reformer" board in that city, as did corrupt politicians in Los Angeles in the Depression. Indeed a centralized board and an internal pyramid of power could make it easier for an unscrupulous machine to dominate the schools if the staff acquiesced in stretching the civil service regulations and in awarding contracts to the right people.[101]

Not only organized machines but most city politics relied heavily on ethnic and religious loyalties to win votes. Although to the structural reformers such considerations were anathema -- partly because the WASP could be so easily outvoted in the big cities -- ethnic factors quickly entered the arena of school politics when control became centralized and as the corporate model became fashionable. No political structure could negate such deep forces in urban society. In pluralistic cities like New York and San Francisco with boards appointed by mayors, political parties found it essential to balance school board nominations on ethnic and religious grounds. In Boston the largest ethnic group, the Irish-Catholics, won more than 80 percent of the school board positions since 1931, Joseph Cronin reports, for there the elected small board gave their political organization powerful leverage.

Within urban systems different ethnic groups often moved up the hierarchies in succession, strengthening their hold through informal networks of information and influence. These informal lines of communication often coexisted with a firmly-held belief in the system of authority and in the merit classifications of the bureaucracy. Thus Peter Schrag found in the 1960's that in Boston all members of the board of superintendents -- the top administrative staff at 15 Beacon Street -- were Catholic, all over fifty, all but one graduates of Boston College, and all but one Irish -- but they praised Boston's "impersonal, objective standards of appointing and promoting teachers, its examinations and point scales, its rigid rules and practices governing advancement within the system." As Schrag observed, the informal network of friends with its fast grapevine often worked better than "the system that some civil service reformer dreamed about a half century ago."[102]

Structural reformers claimed that giving the superintendent a larger and more clearly defined sphere of authority could create a more stable and conflict-free position, according to the norms of the corporate model, but in many cities, both school boards and subordinates resented what they saw as the autocracy of the new captains of education. In Chicago, for example, McAndrew faced unending insurgency and sabotage from angry teachers. Six teachers in Cleveland sought an injunction against Superintendent Frederick when he blacklisted them for organizing a union in 1914. "You are out of harmony with the public, your real employer," the judge told the superintendent. "In your loyal service to your nominal master, the board, you have drifted away from your real master .... The system is sick, very sick. Two things only will cure it: Light and air, agitation and ventilation."[103]

Superintendent James H. Van Sickle aroused hostility from teachers in Baltimore when he came to the city under a reform charter of 1898. He served an elite new board of education in what he called a "progressive movement." Among his first tasks was firing sixty teachers and eliminating many principals appointed by the previous board. "Mutiny" soon developed in the teaching force, wrote George Strayer, especially in reaction to a new promotional examination run by the superintendent and two appointees. Teachers had to pass this barrier -- including "an impersonal test of the correct and effective use and interpretation of English" -- before they could advance in salary. Then as now it was easier to talk about merit than to assess it, and teachers organized to fight the superintendent (although some of the "more progressive element" said Strayer, supported Van Sickle). The two largest organizations, the 1000-woman Elementary Teachers' Association and the Public School Teachers Association, headed by a man, both tried to persuade the board to give up the merit scheme. In the spring of 1911 they helped to elect a Democratic mayor, who promptly assembled the school commissioners and told them that more than a thousand of the teachers "have lost confidence in the fairness and good faith of Mr. Van Sickle, and are in a state bordering on revolt." The new school board fired the superintendent and appointed two of the teacher leaders, both of whom had been charged with "insubordination," to important administrative posts.[104]

Many school board members as well as teachers resisted giving superintendents autonomy to run the schools as they saw fit. The editor of the School Board Journal, William Bruce, bitterly attacked a report by a committee of the NEA chaired by Andrew Draper. Draper's plan would have basically made the school board into a rubber stamp. He charged that committeemen "override and degrade a superintendent, when they have the power to do so, until he becomes their mere factotem." Through cartoons and editorials and letters solicited from subscribers, Bruce attacked Draper and his colleagues as despots. One cartoon portrays "The Modern Feast of Herod" and shows Draper serving up the head of the people in a bowl, declaiming "A superintendent alone must rule. Henceforth behead all school boards." An article in the same journal in 1916 called "Why Superintendents Lose Their Jobs" described the insecurities of high office and said that "nothing, absolutely nothing, is of more vital consuming interest to the average superintendent of schools than the tremendously important question of whether he will be retained in his present position for the coming year. He knows from statistics, observation and experience that he is in the most hazardous occupation known to insurance executives.... No gambling house would be sufficiently reckless to bet on the changes of re-election for school superintendents three years or even two years ahead." Significangly, the author was an anonymous "veteran fighter in the field of American education."[105] In 1918, elected superintendent Roncovieri told the San Francisco Commonwealth Club that it was futile to hope that the corporate model would necessarily promote "harmonious relations" between school board and superintendent. "The human equation is ever present, and in so far as San Francisco is concerned no such upheavals have occurred as happened in Berkeley when Superintendent Bunker tried to recall the Board of Education and failed, and in Denver recently when Superintendent Cole succeeded in recalling the members of the Board of Education that were opposed to him." Progressive Superintendent J.H. Francis was not re-elected in Los Angeles when elite factions fought other elite factions in the city in 1914. "Even men like Superintendent Van Sickle, formerly of Baltimore, resigned," said Roncovieri, "rather than submit to being bossed by those who stood over him as members of the Board of Education." One cannot legislate a structure that will ordain harmony, he argued.[106]

Structural reform could offer, then, no sure relief from insecurity of office for the leaders, insubordination by employees, corruption and machine domination, ethnic influence and informal networks of power within the system, or any of the other forms of political behavior that the corporate model was designed to minimize. Structure did count, however, though not always in the manner intended. With centralization and the corporate model in the large cities came the growth of vast and layered bureaucracies of specialized offices, differentiation of patterns of schooling to the specifications of a new "science" of education, byzantine organization charts, tens of thousands of incumbents protected by tenure, and many people within the city bewildered about how to influence the behemoth that had promised accountability.

PART IV

INSIDE THE SYSTEM:
PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN SCHOOLS, 1890-1940

1. Introduction

One August day, Helen Todd climbed the long stairs of a converted warehouse on Lake Street in Chicago. When she reached the attic, the smell of turpentine and the blast of heat from the cement furnace nauseated her. Inside were fourteen girls aged fourteen or fifteen sitting on stools and lacquering canes. After inspecting the room, she sat down to talk with some of them: "How can you stand it here, children?" she asked. "Why don't you little girls go to school? School! cried one who had given her name as Tillie Isakowsky, aged fourteen years and three months, shaking her head until her red bows trembled. School is de fiercest t'ing youse kin come up against. Factories ain't no cinch, but schools is worst." All over the city in her rounds as factory inspector, Helen Todd heard similar stories. She asked 500 children this question in 1909: "If your father had a good job and you didn't have to work, which would you rather do -- go to school or work in a factory?" Of these 500, 412 said they preferred the factory. Bewildered, Todd jotted down their reasons:

> "Because it's easier to work in a factory than 'tis to learn in school."
>
> "They ain't always pickin' on you because you don't know things in a factory."
>
> "The children don't holler at ye and call ye a Christ-killer in a factory."
>
> "They're good to you at home when you earn money."
>
> "What ye learn in school ain't no good. Ye git paid just as much in the factory if ye never was there."
>
> "School ain't no good. When you works a whole month at school, the teacher she gives you a card to take home, that says how you ain't any good. And yer folks holler on yer and hits yer."

In the basement of a building in the stockyards, Inspector Todd stumbled over a thirteen year old boy who had huddled there, hoping she would not discover him. He wept bitterly when told he would have to go to school, blurting between his sobs that "They hits ye if yer don't learn, and they hits ye if ye whisper, and they hits ye if ye have string in yer pocket, and they hits ye if yer seat squeaks, and they hits ye if ye don't stan' up in time, and they hits ye if yer late, and they hits ye if ye ferget the page." Again and again she heard the same story: 269 children said they preferred factory to school because no one hit them there. They were more "push-outs" than "drop-outs."[1]

At the turn of the century Chicago was a center of a movement to humanize schooling and to train teachers to understand the natural learning processes of children. The charismatic progressive Francis Parker taught hundreds of teachers at the Cook County Normal School in the years from 1896 to 1899, showing them his techniques for employing the child's curiosity as the easy and pleasant path of instruction. John Dewey was developing his progressive philosophy and practice of teaching at his famous Laboratory School at the University of Chicago. "What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child," he told an audience in Chicago in 1899, "that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy." One of Dewey's strongest advocates, Ella Flagg Young, became superintendent of the Chicago schools in 1909. Barely five feet tall, a woman of great courage, intelligence, and compassion, she taught teachers about Dewey's "new education" when she served as instructor at the Normal School from 1905 to 1909. Like her friend Jane Addams, she was most concerned about reaching the children of the slums, largely second-generation immigrants (67 percent of Chicago pupils in 1909 were children of foreign-born parents).[2]

Obviously there was a gap between what leaders intended and children perceived. The view from the top and the view from the bottom sometimes was different in New York, too. Although imposing and stern in appearance, with his frock-coat and walrus moustache, superintendent William Maxwell felt deeply about the suffering of the poor. He knew that thousands of children came hungry to school each day and that stomach pains gnawed at them as they tried to study; he thought providing cheap lunches in schools the "most pressing of all school reforms." He proudly told of a principal on the lower east side who picked her way like a princess through the crowds and the pushcarts on the street while children smiled at her, older boys tipped their caps, and bearded men greeted her. He helped to install baths in schools so that children who had no water in their flats could get clean. He marveled at the ability of teachers who instructed pupils who could speak no English; in one school alone there were twenty-nine different languages or dialects. He stayed in the city during the steaming summer months partly to encourage those teaching in the vacation schools where hundreds of thousands of children went voluntarily to learn crafts and nature study. Maxwell told with delight about a little girl, Leah, who invited her teacher home to eat at a table set just like the one in the picture in a magazine her teacher had lent to her.[3]

But for all this dedication the reward from "crowded, ignorant, prejudiced, and highly excitable people" was often distrust. In 1907, Maxwell said teachers in an east side school faced a riot in which "frenzied mothers and fathers by the thousands besieged the school." The reason: parents thought that "the children's throats were being cut." The school had 150 children whose adenoids were enlarged -- a condition assumed to contribute to mental retardation. When eighty parents refused to take their children to clinics to have the adenoids removed, the principal decided to bring in a surgeon to operate on the children in the school. For days thereafter, whenever a health board doctor appeared in the ghetto, "it was the signal for a mob to storm the gates of the schoolhouse." To these Jewish parents the school was capable of genocide.[4]

Pushouts working in factories, pedagogical reformers, kindly teachers, paternalistic yet humane superintendent, anxious parents -- all had different perspectives on city schools, all meaningful to them as part of their own construction of reality. They knew what their experience taught them, and for them there was no one true reality apart from that anymore than there is for us in looking back. What we can try to do is to look from multiple perspectives inside the organization and at some of the experience outside the schools that shaped perceptions inside.

For the administrators at the top of city school systems, together with their mentors in universities and lay allies, the years from 1890 to 1940 represented largely a success story whose plot was largely apparent early in the twentieth century, though details sometimes were in doubt. As leaders like Cubberley taught in his popular history of public education, the public school was part of a larger social evolution whose beneficence was not to be doubted by the faithful. Challenges abounded, to be sure, but the strategies to respond to them were to be found in "science" and in administrative efficiency and professional specialization. For leading schoolmen it was an age of confidence inspired by a dream of social efficiency, though deflated here and there by backward folk both within and without the system.[5]

The administrative progressives believed that they knew what was wrong with the one best system which Philbrick and his peers had labored to create: it was too "bookish," rigid, and undiversified, ill-adapted to the great variety of students flooding the upper grades of elementary schools and the secondary schools and poorly serving the needs of the economy for specialized manpower. The modernized system should "meet the needs of the children" but these needs and social demands could be assessed scientifically and the system reshaped accordingly. Intelligence testing and other forms of measurement provided the technology for classifying children. Nature-nurture controversies might pepper the scientific periodicals and magazines of the intelligentia, but schoolmen found IQ tests invaluable means of channeling children; by the very act of channeling pupils, they helped to make the IQ prophecies self-fulfilling. Likewise, the differentiation of secondary education into tracks and the rise of vocational schooling represented a profound shift in the conception of the functions of universal education.[6]

In one respect, however, the administrative progressives continued and indeed accentuated one of the earlier purposes of public schooling: the Americanization of the foreign-born and their children. In the two decades bracketing World War I, especially, concern for homogenizing American beliefs and behavior reached a fever pitch. Just as it was the educator who decided which differences among children were significant in the tracking of children into a differentiated system, so it was leading schoolmen and powerful native-American interest groups that determined the proper pattern of socialization to American norms. With but few dissenters, policy-makers in these years saw pluralism as a peril.[7]

As persons in the middle of the growing school bureaucracies, teachers were often restive. When they became better educated and learned a rhetoric of professionalism, they more and more objected to being functionaries. As they seized power here and there in their unions and professional associations, they demanded greater security, autonomy, and pay. Women, especially, gained new assurance and won equal pay and greater influence. But the tensions of being "professionals" at low levels within hierarchical organizations persisted, largely unresolved.[8]

Although for purposes of official policy pupils were members of a "unitary community" of persons who differed in ways measurable individually by the tester and significant to the psychologically trained counselor or administrator, they were also members of different ethnic and religious and class groups. Just as welfare workers were trained to think in psychological ways and to regard their "cases" as individual problems, so teachers and administrators often came under the spell of the individualistic orientation of the psychologists who dominated educational thought. Educators often failed to see that many problems children faced in school were sociological and economic in character and were, in C. Wright Mills' terms, "public issues" rather than "personal troubles." Early in the century, as now, the culture of the school poorly fit the culture of certain sub-groups in the population. When Italian-American children, for example, scored an average of 85 on IQ tests and dropped out of school in droves, it indicated not a plethora of individual problems but a mis-match of institutional demands and group norms and behavior. To explore this phenomenon it is useful to look at two groups -- Italians and Jews -- who differed markedly in their response to schooling.[9]

It is probably ahistorical and inaccurate to malign the intentions of schoolmen in their campaign to differentiate the structure of schools, to classify students, to socialize politically in uniform ways. With but few exceptions their motives were good, their belief in the objectivity of their "scientific" procedures manifest, their achievements in the face of massive challenges impressive. But some unforeseen consequences of administrative progressivism become most clear when one looks at the educational experience of those citizens at the bottom of the social structure, in particular those who became victims without "crimes," black Americans.[10]

2. Success Story: The Administrative Progressives

Looking back on the previous quarter century in city school administration, George D. Strayer of Teachers College, Columbia, saw twenty-five years of steady progress. The keys to this success were "the application of the scientific method" and "the professional training of school executives," he believed. At the beginning of the century "a relatively powerful and able group" of administrators had been dubious about the benefits of educational science, he said, but by 1930 almost all influential schoolmen had become converts. The results were everywhere apparent: "better organization of the administrative and supervisory" employees into line and staff categories; the differentiation of the "traditional elementary school and senior high school" into institutions like junior high schools, vocational schools, that "provide unique opportunities for boys and girls who vary greatly in their ability to acquire skill and knowledge"; grouping of pupils by scientific tests; the expansion of high schools with multiple tracks until they enrolled 50 percent of students of high school age; extensive revision of the curriculum; the keeping of detailed records on students, from IQ's to physical history and vocational and recreational interests; and rapidly upgrading standards of training for all professional personnel. The principle underlying such progress was "recognition of individual differences" and the consequent attempt "to adjust our schools to the needs and capacities of those who are registered in them."[11]

Statistics revealed the magnitude of the transformation and suggested the character of the challenges schoolmen faced as education became increasingly universal through the high school years. The costs of city schools in 1910 were twice as high as in 1900, three times higher than 1890. From 1890 to 1918 there was, on the average, more than one new high school built for every day of the year. Attendance in high schools increased during that period from 202,963 to 1,645,171, an increase of 711 percent while the total population increased only 68 percent. The curve of secondary school enrollment and graduation continued to soar:[12]

	Percent age-group 14-17 enrolled	High school graduates as percent of population 17 years old
1920	61.6	16.8
1930	73.1	29.0
1940	79.4	50.8

As city systems grew in size and bureaucratic complexity, the number of specialized administrative offices and administrators expanded dramatically. In 1889 the U.S. Commissioner of Education first included data on officers "whose time is devoted wholly or principally to supervision." The category was new enough to cause confusion -- and indeed statistics on the number of administrators and their non-teaching staffs are still hard to determind. That year 484 cities reported an average of only 4 supervisors per city. But from 1890 to 1920 the number of "supervisory officers" jumped from 9 to 144 in Baltimore, 7 to 159 in Boston, 31 to 329 in Detroit, 58 to 155 in St. Louis, 235 to 1,310 in New York, 10 to 159 in Cleveland, and 66 to 268 in Philadelphia. Schoolmen created special programs for retarded, deaf, blind, delinquent, gifted, anemic, and other groups of children, and specialized tracks and schools for vocational and other special training.[13]

With such differentiation came dozens of new job categories, programs of professional preparation, and many new bureaus and officials. Specialists of all sorts formed their own professional associations: superintendents, secondary school principals, elementary school principals, counselors, curriculum directors, vocational education teachers, high school teachers of art, music, English, social studies, and many others. Together with the rapidly expanding college and university departments and schools of education, professional associations helped to persuade state legislatures to pass laws requiring certificates for the various specializations. Replacing the earlier licenses based on examinations, the new certificates were based on completion of professional training and legitimized specialists by level -- e.g., kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, high school -- and by function -- e.g., principal, guidance counselor, school librarian, supervisor, or teacher of vocational subjects. In 1900 only two states had specialized credentials; by 1930 almost all states had elaborate certification laws. In the decade following 1912, 56 cities created research departments that kept track of the new credentials and bureaus, tested the "intelligence" and achievement of pupils, helped to channel students, and amassed statistics for "child accounting" and business management.[14]

In the half century following 1890, then, there was a vast influx into urban schools of youth who previously might have gone to work or roamed the streets, pushed into the classroom by child labor laws and compulsory attendance or attracted by new curricula, activities, and facilities. At the same time, the structure of urban schools became enormously complex and differentiated for diverse groups in the population.

Differentiated education was not a new phenomenon in city schools, of course. We have seen that schoolmen sometimes treated groups like the Irish poor or black children in a manner different from the mainstream of children in the common school. But the goal of uniform education had been an attractive one in the nineteenth century both for practical and ideological reasons. Many of the innovations designed to offer differentiated schooling in the nineteenth century stemmed not so much from career educators as from wealthy philanthropists, merchants, and industrialists. Influential lay people, for example, founded private kindergartens for poor children in cities as far apart as Boston and San Francisco; in a number of cities they privately funded the first public trade schools and commercial high schools, as well as "industrial schools" for the children of the poor; they supported the first program of vocational guidance; they created "parental schools" and other institutions for truants and pre-delinquents; and they sometimes subsidized municipal research bureaus which were the forerunners for research departments of city school systems. Through these programs the elites sought to reach children by-passed by the public schools or to provide skills or services absent in the one best system. Thus kindergartens or industrial schools had taken children off the slum streets; commercial or trade schools had taught skills which industrialists or merchants wanted; vocational counselors in settlement houses had helped boys and girls find jobs. Piece by piece such new agencies were added to the public school structure.[15]

But the administrative progressives were not content with piecemeal reform, however much they might agree with the specific changes pioneered by lay elites. After all, the corporate model of school governance was predicated on the idea that experts should design and run the system. Education professors like Strayer, Cubberley, and Judd, who were training superintendents at Columbia, Chicago, and Stanford, and the new "school executives" who were taking control of big cities and the professional associations were developing new strategies for public schooling as well as differentiated structures. A group of such educational leaders comprised the "Cleveland Conference," which agreed at a meeting in 1918 that the time was ripe for "a radical reorganization" of schooling and concluded that changes would "go on in the haphazard fashion which has characterized our school history unless some group gets together and undertakes in a cooperative way to coordinate reforms."[16]

The administrative progressives were convinced that "traditional education" -- alias the one best system -- was profoundly anachronistic and flawed. In their journals, they attacked the old uniform curriculum, the undifferentiated structure, the recitation methods, and the skimpy training of teachers typical in nineteenth century city schools as rigid, unscientific, wasteful, and inhumane. They were evangelists for a new educational gospel whose incantations were science and social efficiency.[17]

Social efficiency demanded a new relationship between school and society. The administrative progressives believed that the schools should better prepare students for the tasks they would face in life. To them the old idea that a common school grounding in the three R's would suffice for any career and that public education could train any boy to be President of the United Stated was clearly absurd. Cubberley wrote that urban schools should "give up the exceedingly democratic idea that all are equal, and that our society is devoid of classes," and should adapt the school to the existing social structure. "Increasing specialization has divided the people into dozens of more or less clearly defined classes," he wrote, "and the increasing centralization of trade and industry has concentrated business in the hands of a relatively small number .... No longer can a man save up a thousand dollars and start in business for himself with much chance of success. The employee tends to remain an employee; the wage earner tends to remain a wage earner." It was clear that "success is higher up the ladder now than it was a generation ago, while the crowd about the bottom increases every year." Simple realism decreed that the public schools should prepare some students directly for subordinate roles in the economy while it screened out those fit for further training in higher education. As we shall see, the "science" of psychological measurement would enable schoolmen to retain their traditional faith in individual opportunity while giving discrimination on class grounds the aura of benign rationality.[18]

The old undifferentiated schools, said Cubberley, were inefficient factories. "The waste of material is great ... in part because the workmen ... are not supplied with enough of the right kind of tools; in part because the supervision ... is inadequate ... but largely because the establishment is not equipped with enough large pieces of specialized machinery, located in special shops or units of the manufacturing plant, to enable it to meet modern manufacturing conditions." School systems, he wrote should be "factories in which the raw materials [children] are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life. The specifications for manufacturing come from the demands of the twentieth century civilization ...."19

William H. Dooley, principal of Technical High School in Fall River, Massachusetts, gave one such set of specifications in his book called The Education of the Ne'er-Do-Well (educators have been wonderfully prolific in names for the "laggard," "slow learner," "retarded," "reluctant," "hand-minded," "disadvantaged," child who doesn't fit the system). Dooley maintained that schooling should be mostly adapted to the 85 percent of pupils who would become workers in industry and commerce and who were in danger of becoming cogs in the machine. Untrained, such people might become technologically unemployed, a condition that "breeds discontent that threatens the existence of our government." The old patterns of learning to work on farm or through apprenticeship no worked for city children, nor did the older forms of moral socialization operate effectively. Now a child might wake up in the morning to find his parents off to the mill, go to school dirty and hungry, and "spend the day and evening on the streets, with the result that the dormant vicious tendencies are allowed to develop instead of being stifled by proper parental influence." Schools that teach an abstract curriculum and promote students on the basis of a literary test fail the "motor-minded" child. An efficient school, on the other hand, will measure and account for every child, providing different opportunities depending on her needs.

"Unskilled and socially inefficient" children of new immigrants constituted a particularly troublesome subset of the "ne'er-do-well" class. It would be unwise to forbid such children to work in factories between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, thought Dooley, for "they have descended from ancestors who mature early in life and have intensely practical ideas, and therefore should develop useful industrial habits during the early part of adolescence." It is only misguided "groups of social workers in this country attempting to tear down our institutions" who would force "unjust legislation on the community, such as compulsory full-time education for children up to sixteen years of age or over." No, what these children need is the industrial discipline of a job supplemented by a vocational part-time school. However harsh Dooley's attitude may appear today, his concern for the millworker's child was genuine and his proposal for a continuation school was at least an advance over a 10-hour day of unbroken drudgery. Not all administrative progressives agreed with Dooley's particular specifications for the proletarian child or with Cubberley's open avowal of class-based education, of course. But the underlying principle of differentiating schooling to meet the needs of different classes of pupils -- as determined by the educational expert in the light of the presumed career of the student -- almost all would have accepted. This was the heart of the doctrine of social efficiency.

It was partly for this reason that the educational sociologist David Snedden so admired the experiments possible in reform schools, for there the experts had a pre-selected population over whom they had virtually total social control.[20]

The school survey became a favorite technique to spread the program of the administrative progressives. Hollis Caswell reported that there were 67 surveys of city school systems by outside experts published during the period from 1910 to 1919, 114 in the years from 1920 to 1927. During the first years of the survey movement it was common for laymen in elite organizations like a Chamber of Commerce to bring in experts to point out faults in the schools and to propose the corporate model of reform. This gave administrative progressives an opportunity to castigate "traditional education" and the village model of school governance, but it was a bit hard on incumbent board members and school employees.[21]

Two such surveys were the ones conducted under the direction of Harvard's Paul Hanus in New York in 1911-1912 and the study of Portland, Oregon, conducted by a task force under Cubberley and published in 1913. The Hanus staff claimed that the uniform curriculum in New York represented the "idealism" of the pre-industrial period and was quite out of place under modern economic conditions. An "old-fashioned uniform course of study has served only to confuse and impede the real success of the school," although administrators there prided themselves on the standardized curriculum and the habits of obedience they inculcated. The surveyors claimed that mental independence became a form of insubordination and that the hierarchy had created "bureaucratic control all along the line," from the superintendent on down, rather than professional "cooperation under leadership." Principals and supervisors were mere inspectors, certifying compliance with the rules; most teaching, not surprisingly, was mechanical.[22]

In Portland, Cubberley's team found similar conditions. They concluded that "the most fundamental principle observed in the conduct of the Portland school system is the maintenance unchanged of a rigidly prescribed, mechanical system, poorly adapted to the needs of either the children or the community." Since both principals and teachers had no chance to make decisions, the result was "a uniformity that is almost appalling." The curriculum was "vivisected with mechanical accuracy into fifty-four dead pieces." The most astounding feature of the program was that no one could either explain or justify it. "School board and superintendent, as well as principals, teachers, and pupils, are victims of the system for which no one is primarily responsible." The origin of the bureaucracy was a mystery; pride, ritual, and fear maintained it. Because authority was so diffused in the board's subcommittees, the superintendent was reduced to a drill-sergeant.[23]

The script was a familiar one, and insulted superintendents like New York's Maxwell and Portland's Rigler could justly claim that the "experts" had made up their minds before coming. Because of some of the early muckraking, surveys earned a bad reputation in some quarters, especially among those superintendents, like Rigler, who were deposed. But as the movement matured, it became increasingly a device for "progressive" superintendents to enlist the aid of outsiders to make changes they wanted anyway. By the time Caswell made his study of surveys in the late 1920's most of the superintendents not only survived the surveys but applauded them. When Leonard Koos sent inquiries to twenty-five superintendents whose cities had been surveyed, fourteen of the eighteen who replied said that they favored the studies. Supporting the survey movement was a network of university professors, administrative progressives in the city school systems, the United States Office of Education, lay reformers in civic organizations, and foundations. Rockefeller's General Education Board set up its own division of school surveys which did studies of Gary, Indiana, and numerous states. The Russell Sage Foundation supported numerous surveys, including one comparing "efficiency" of education in the forty-eight states. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching made an inquiry into public schools in Vermont; its president, Henry Pritchett, wrote in 1914 that a society that lacked centralized state control required "authoritative records of what has been and is being done, and ... more and more comprehensive and competent educational criticism and construction." The Cleveland Foundation backed a large-scale study of schools in that city. In 1917 a writer in the annual report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education commented that in doing surveys "private philanthropy has taken the initiative, as so often, in doing work for which the Government was not yet ready," but added that the bureau of education was by then ready to perform that service. For a brief period the Bureau and state education departments conducted the most surveys, but by the early 1920's the customary agency was a special bureau for survey research located in a college of education.[24]

At the same time that surveys expanded the influence of foundations, government agencies, and universities, they often provided superintendents and school boards with leverage to introduce reforms. Raymond Moley reported that more than three-quarters of the recommendations of the Cleveland education survey were rapidly put into effect. Caswell found that many innovations favored by the administrative progressives were incorporated in city systems after surveys, often as a direct result of the study. The following chart indicates some of these changes as reported by superintendents in fifty cities, and together they constitute an index of the program and priorities of the administrative progressives:[25]

Change	Following Survey Percent	Direct Result of Survey Percent
1. Clearer definition of duties of board and superintendent	46	57
2. Abolition or reduction of standing committees of board	34	53
3. Hiring of personnel only on recommendation of superintendent	34	53
4. Addition of specialized administrative staff	54	44
5. Adoption of improved system of pupil records	62	42
6. Adoption of improved financial accounting	56	36
7. Increase in per-pupil expenditure	64	28
8. Improvement in qualifications for teachers	62	45
9. Increase in teachers' salaries	74	35
10. Adoption of ability grouping	52	38
11. Reduction in percent of over-aged pupils	66	36
12. Reduction in percent of failure	64	31
13. More frequent use of standardized tests	60	40
14. Revision of curriculum	68	47
15. Curriculum differentiated for slow and fast pupils	50	32
16. Courses added to curriculum	48	38

The administrative progressives saw success in such statistics and good reason to believe that their influence on the structure and processes of American urban education was growing. Few were the voices raised in public dissent against their general program, though dissenters there were, as we shall see. And the administrative progressives found articulate allies across a wide political spectrum. In the New Republic, the liberal intellectual Randolph Bourne applauded Cubberley's Portland survey, saying that "it stirs enthusiasm because it shows the progress that has been made in clarifying the current problems and the ideals which must be realized if the public school is to prepare the child of today for intelligent participation in the society of which he will form a part."

Traditional education in Portland, he wrote, "seems more like the ritual of some primitive tribe than the deliberate educational activity of an enlightened American community," yet precisely that is "the type that still prevails in the majority of our cities."[26]

Scott Nearing, a professor of economics who would soon be fired for his liberal views, was as impressed as Bourne with the program of the administrative progressives. In his book The New Education he described the changes in the Cincinnati schools wrought by Superintendent Dyer and the community. Dyer, he said, tried the radical experiment of trusting his principals and teachers to adapt the curriculum to the children. "Up here on the hill, in a wealthy suburban district," he told his staff, "is a grammar school. Its organization, administration and course of study must necessarily differ from that other school, located in the heart of the factory district." It was up to the principals to adapt the school to the people.

What this might mean became clear in the Oyler School, on the wrong side of the railroad tracks and surrounded by factories and little houses. There the principal appealed to the factory owners to support a manual training program. Later with the help of Dyer he set up prevocational programs in which "sub-normal" elementary pupils could spend a whole day a week, while others spent a lesser proportion of their time in shop work and domestic science. The boys turned out marketable products in workrooms patterned on real factories. A manufacturer told Nearing that he supported the schools gladly because they made good citizens and because he believed "that the material prosperity of a people is directly related to the mental and manual equipment of its people." At the Oyler School the principal worked through the mothers' club to change patterns of child-raising and to upgrade the appearance of the neighborhood. Discipline problems vanished, more children went to high schools, the school became a center of "community" -- it was Nearing's model of the "new education."[27]

Then as now, personal concern and energy could transform a school and thereby change the lives of children. For men like Nearing and Bourne, who lived by words, rhetoric like "meeting the needs of children" and "co-operation" distinguished the new education from the old and predisposed them to favor the success story of the administrative progressives. They saw a challenge in the floods of new children in the schools, a crisis of urban community, a traditional education that had outgrown its inspiration and calcified its routines. Whether the administrative progressives could meet the challenge of "ne'er-do-wells" humanely, could recreate a meaningful community, and could replace the old education with a better new one -- these depended in part on the uses they made of the new science they worshipped.

3. Science

When Alfred Kazin returned to the Brownsville neighborhood in Brooklyn where he grew up, the sight of the school reminded him "of those Friday morning 'tests' that were the terror of my childhood." Self-effacing parents yearned to hear of "every fresh victory in our savage competition for 'high averages,' for prizes, for a few condescending words of official praise ...." On the teacher's desk sat the "white, cool, thinly ruled record book" in which all defects of character were entered, all percentages averaged, all merits duly noted, "columns and columns in which to note everything about us, implacably and forever." Teachers "were the delegates of all visible and invisible power on earth -- of the mothers who waited on the stoops every day after three for us to bring home tales of our daily triumphs; of the glacially remote Anglo-Saxon principal whose very name was King; of the incalculably important Superintendent of Schools who would someday rubberstamp his name to the bottom of our diplomas in grim acknowledgement that we had, at last, given satisfaction to him, to the Board of Superintendents, and to our benefactor the City of New York...." Kazin "lived for the blessed sound of the dismissal gong at three o'clock on Friday," exhausted from anxiety about all that would be "decimally measured into that white record book." "I was awed by the system," he recalled. "Behind any failure in school yawned the great abyss of a criminal career. Every refractory attitude doomed you with the sound 'Sing Sing.'"[28]

At about the same time, in 1922, John Dewey reflected about the meaning of the constant testing, categorizing, and competition he saw about him. "our mechanical, industrialized civilization is concerned with averages, with percents. The mental habit which reflects this social scene subordinates education and social arrangements based on averaged gross inferiorities and superiorities." The school system was becoming a vast filtering system, he feared, unaware of its own biases: "we welcome a procedure which under the title of science sinks the individual in a numerical class; judges him with reference to capacity to fit into a limited number of vocations ranked according to present business standards; assigns him to a predestined niche and thereby does whatever education can do to perpetuate the present order."[29]

From different perspectives, Kazin recalling his childhood, and Dewey speaking as social philosopher, each was responding to a function of schooling that was gaining greater importance: educators were increasingly serving as the gatekeepers to opportunity. In this task schoolmen turned more and more to "scientific" measures of ability and achievement. What they sought was a technology of objective discrimination, for selection was prerequisite to differentiation. Through such a technology the needs of the student, the needs of the educational system, and the needs of the larger society could be more precisely calibrated and the connecting parts more smoothly meshed.[30]

One of the first questions to occupy the minds of educational scientists was the high rate of "retardation" (or students who over-age or repeated the same grades) and "elimination" (or children who left school). In an age that worshipped efficiency, over-aged students and school leavers were signs of malfunction that required analysis. Besides the waste of money and effort, forcing children to repeat grades was inhumane. "They are thoroughly trained in failure" by such a procedure, wrote Leonard Ayres: "under our present system there are large numbers of children who are destined to live lives of failure. We know them in the schools as the children who are always a little behind physically, a little behind intellectually, and a little behind in the power to do. Such a child is the one who is always 'It' in the competitive games of childhood."[31]

Beginning in 1904, Superintendent Maxwell of New York printed tables indicating that over a third of the children in the elementary schools of the city were over the normal age for their school grade. "How vividly do we recall the attention which Dr. Maxwell's figures attracted," wrote an educational statistician. The news spread fast by word of mouth, was published in magazines and newspapers, and quoted at conventions. "One superintendent would whisper to another, 'Have you heard of the awful conditions in New York? Forty percent of the children are too old for their grades!' With Pharisaical satisfaction yet gravely as befitted the sad occasion, the other would reply, 'Yes, the school conditions in New York are very bad; but then you know what you must expect when politics run the schools.'" After shaking their heads over Tammany, superintendents would then go home confidently to "collect the information as to the ages and grades of the pupils under their care. Whereupon, like as not, in one community after another a solemn hush ensued." In most cities failure was a way of life for vast numbers of children.[32]

In 1909 Leonard Ayres' book *Laggards in Our Schools* used sober statistics to analyze a dramatic problem. The year before, Edward T. Thorndike had aroused the alarm of citizens and the ire of superintendents with his study "The Elimination of Pupils from School," which concluded that almost half the pupils entering school did not reach the eighth grade. Using a generous definition of "normal age" -- two-year spans, starting with six-to-eight-year-olds for the first grade -- Ayres showed a remarkable decrease in the number of children in each elementary grade from one to eight. Chicago, for example, had 43,560 pupils in first grade, only 12,939 in the eighth. Even allowing for the absolute increase in population of younger children and cumulative child mortality among the older, the rate of elimination and retardation of children was staggering. Ayres estimated that about 33 percent of all pupils were "laggards": promotion rates varied in cities he studied from 71 percent in Kansas City to 84 percent in Chicago. "The general tendency of American cities is to carry all of their children through the fifth grade, to take one-half of them to the eighth grade and one in ten through high school," Ayres concluded.[33]

Ayres found no clear explanation for the different rates of failure in the different schools. Illness, irregular attendance, late entrance, inadequate compulsory laws or lax enforcement all contributed their part. Some immigrant groups had higher rates of "retardation" than "Americans," but some foreign groups had lower. Pointing out that nationwide there were "more illiterates proportionally among native whites of native parents" than among the children of immigrants, Ayres took basically a wait-and-see attitude toward the question "Is the immigrant a blessing or a curse?" He noted that there was little correlation between the retention of pupils and the number of foreign-born citizens in a city.[34]

While ethnic differences were cloudy, he found clear sex differences in retention, : 13 percent more boys repeated grades than girls, and 17 percent more girls completed elementary school. "*These facts mean*," said Ayres, "*that our schools as at present constituted are far better fitted to the needs of the girls than they are to those of the boys*."[35]

As a statistician, Ayres believed that one prerequisite to reform was "a better knowledge of the facts." It was scandalous, he thought, that "in hardly a city in the country can the school authorities tell how many pupils begin school each year, or how fast they advance, or what proportion finish or why they fall out, or where or why they lose time." In addition to better "child accounting" Ayres advocated stronger compulsory education laws and enforcement, more thorough medical inspection, flexible grading, and "courses of study which will more nearly fit the abilities of the average child." While here and there he dropped a hint that the reason for failure lay within the child, Ayres mostly blamed educational systems which taught children to fail.[36]

The revelations of Ayres, Thorndike, and others came at a critical point for urban schoolmen, for costs were mushrooming and criticisms of public schools were heard on every hand, especially from business groups. To retain children for two years in the same grade occupied scarce classroom space and cost additional teacher salaries. The drop-out figures startled even well-informed schoolmen. In 1908 Andrew Draper, then Commissioner of Education for New York State, confessed that he had "assumed that practically all of the children who do not go to the high schools do finish the elementary schools." All over the country commentators called the elimination of pupils a sign of inefficiency. "Those of a more gifted imagination have seen in ... [these statistics] evidence of a conspicuous failure of our schools to accomplish the purpose for which they are designed," wrote Ayres, "while those more cautious by nature have not hesitated to make it a reproach upon certain cities that their upper grades contained relatively fewer pupils than those of other localities." It had been common for schoolmen to regard a relatively low rate of promotion as a symptom of high standards, and hence good schools, but that changed with the unfavorable publicity. The fact of high rates of over-aged or "retarded" pupils was not a new phenomenon -- indeed in six cities Ayres studied retardation was lower in 1906-1907 than in 1895-1896 (31.6 versus 39.9 percent) -- but by 1908 it became a problem because of new public awareness and criticism and new conceptions of schooling.[37]

"Retardation" was man-made, of course, an educational artifact. Age-grading of pupils was not divinely inspired or imbedded in the order of human nature; much less were standards of promotion unalterable. Indeed, the notion that children should acquire their education in a school classroom was a relatively recent invention in human history. Yet by the early twentieth century the pre-eminence of the school, the self-evident necessity of age-grading (though with some revisions to make the system more flexible), and the notion of measurable standards of performance were rarely questioned by the people inside the system. This left two major strategies for schoolmen to pursue in adapting the school to the pupils pouring into classrooms: to alter curriculum and methods; and to devise ways of channeling children into appropriate tracks.[38]

The pedagogical side of educational "progressivism" concerned itself primarily with procedures such as the "project method" or the "contract plan," or on the other hand, with revising the content of traditional disciplines and adding new subjects to adapt the school to the great variety of new students. These changes normally focused on the transaction between an individual teacher and her pupils -- surely a vital part of any kind of educational change. But the administrative progressives were also deeply concerned with large structural changes and with the relation between the parts of the educational system and between school and society. In order to fulfill their plan of differentiation they needed a technology of objective discrimination.[39]

There had been a winnowing process in urban schools from the beginning, of course. Some children learned what they were taught and passed from one grade to the next; some didn't. But if one assumed that the school that did not retain students was inefficient and "undemocratic," this earlier period of selection was wasteful and primitive. It would be far better, thought the administrative progressives, to be able to identify the able, the normal, and the slow from the start, to provide them with appropriate instruction, and by secondary school to sort them out according to their likely careers.[40]

In World War I came an important breakthrough in this process of differentiation. Like urban schools, the army then faced a mass of humanity which it was expected to train and then to place in different slots in complex organizations. A group of leading psychologists gathered to develop group intelligence tests which could classify recruits. Prior to that time there had been some preliminary work on group I.Q. tests, based partly on the work of Alfred Binet, but here at the beginning of the war was an opportunity for a mass experiment. In a little over a month the psychologists wrote and field-tested the examinations. The resulting Alpha and Beta tests were given to 1,726,966 army men.[41]

At first the testers expected that they could only identify those at the two ends of the intelligence spectrum -- the unfit and the leaders -- but as they investigated the validity of the test, they found that there was a high correlation between the test score and an officer's rating of the efficiency of a soldier in his position. As Joel Spring points out, the chief validation of the test was an officer's assessment of "practical soldierly value," which commonly meant following orders in a snappy way. Hence the tests became increasingly used to fit individuals into specific jobs. In short, the tests had consequences: in part on the basis of a short group examination created by a few psychologists in about a month, testee number 964,221 might go to the trenches in France while number 1,072,538 might go to offices in Washington.[42]

But results of the army tests had other consequences as well. They appeared to give scientific validation to social prejudice. They created the illusion that the social order was close to a meritocracy since the fittest seemed mostly on top. They helped to fix on the mass institutions of education, civil service, and business narrow standards of what constituted ability. All this was no malevolent plot. In the war the psychologists were men trying to make democracy work efficiently in what they believe was a great cause. They saw themselves as scientists and on occasion changed their minds when evidence proved them wrong in their assertions and assumptions. They even had their moments of utopian dreaming of a smoothly-running, conflict-free society where talent rose and ruled benignly. But the effects of their technology of objective discrimination need to be assessed as well as their intentions.[43]

In 1923 one of the original creators of the army tests, Carl Brigham, wrote A Study of American Intelligence, which analyzed ethnic and racial differences in "intelligence" as judged by data from the tests. He found what he thought was conclusive proof that "representatives of the Alpine and Mediterranean races are intellectually inferior to the representatives of the Nordic race." At the bottom of all white groups were black Americans. The mixing of genes from Europeans of poor stock was bad enough, he said, but "we must face a possibility of racial admixture that is infinitely worse ... for we are incorporating the Negro into our racial stock ...." Low scores of southeastern Europeans on the army tests confirmed WASP belief in their inferiority and gave powerful arguments to those Congressmen who voted to discriminate against them in the immigration restriction laws of the 1920's.[44]

It was, of course, relatively easy to disprove Brigham's shaky "science," and to his credit he disavowed his interpretation in 1930. Studies which grouped scores by states, for example, showed that the predominantly "Nordic" white soldiers from the South "made the lowest scores of any registered by white soldiers in America" -- and Negro soldiers from certain northern states scored well above whites from certain southern states. Another critique of Brigham's assumptions matched army alpha scores by states with the Ayres index of efficiency of schooling in these states and found a coefficient of correlation of .58. Clearly something more than genes was at work.[45]

For the most part, the scores in the army alpha tests correlated well with the prestige and pay of occupations in the business world -- that is they rose in fairly regular fashion from the 45 to 49 normally achieved by a laborer through the various kinds of semi-skilled and skilled occupations to bookkeeper at 100 to 104. That seemed to indicate almost an intellectual caste system. But over 104, some strange things happened:

105 to 109	Mechanical engineer.
110 to 114	Mechanical draughtsman.
115 to 119	Stenographer, typist, accountant, civil engineer, Y.M.C.A. secretary, medical officer.
125 and over	Army chaplains, engineer officers.

Critics of the tests wondered if such occupations represented really the flower of American "intelligence," or rather minds adept at "smartly meeting the petty rounds of a high-speed office world" or working smoothly at technical tasks in hierarchical organizations. Nonetheless, the army test experience prompted school testing experts to urge the extensive use of IQ scores in vocational guidance and in the assignment of students to lanes leading to different careers.[46]

The nature-nurture controversy did not -- and apparently will not -- die, though in time it became more sophisticated. Of most significance in the everyday lives of children, however, were the ways in which tests actually were used. To illustrate: one could say that threading a needle in three seconds is a test of intelligence and then deal with children on the basis of their performance; whether the test had any validity as a test of "innate mental ability" or not, it would surely have consequences for the pupil -- and those consequences could feed back to the child in such a way as to fulfill the prophecy made by test.

Prior to the army tests, mental examinations were often popularly associated with disordered minds -- feeble, sick, in some way peculiar (Binet had first designed his individual examination to discover feeble-minded children). But during the war, magazines and newspapers carried favorable accounts of the army testing program and helped to convince parents that there was nothing abnormal about their children being tested.[47]

In 1921 the president of the National Association of Directors of Educational Research commented that educators quickly seized on the new group intelligence tests as a means of sorting children for instruction: "Teachers, administrators, and supervisors ... have received the adaptations of the group intelligence examination to school uses with open arms and all too often with uncritical acceptance of what has been made available." Testing became a commercial bonanza. When the army tests were first opened for "commercial distribution the publishers accepted the offer as an adventure, printing a lot of 10,000." But when a group of psychologists revised the army scales for school use, under a grant from the General Education Board, 400,000 copies of the resulting "National Intelligence Test" were sold the first six months on the market. A year later Lewis Terman reported that there were a dozen group tests available for all levels of the educational system and estimated that not less than two million children were tested in 1920-21; shortly, he said, "we may expect the number to exceed five millions."[48]

Indeed, as Paul Chapman has observed, the IQ testing movement swept the nation as an educational crusade, often starting from university centers like Columbia and Stanford. "The importance of this new psychological tool for the improvement of school administration has been recognized everywhere," wrote Terman, "with a promptness which is hardly less than amazing." Terman even felt it necessary to warn against false hopes: "the over-enthusiastic will gradually learn that not even the universal use of intelligence tests will bring us to an educational millenium."

Some of the followers were less cautious than the leaders and attacked opponents of intelligence testing as obscurantists, old fogies, or even people who believe in the Declaration of Independence or "the rabid mouthings of I.W.W.'s proclaiming the equality of men." Articles and books glowed with testimonials of principals and teachers about the value of the tests.[49]

School people did admit that sometimes parents were unhappy about the way their children were classified. One director of testing thought that the task of dealing with parents was best delegated to teachers because "many parents are more willing to comply when the decision appears to have been made by the teacher" rather than "handled by an impersonal system operated in some central administrative office." In point of fact, however, it was often the central research bureau that gave the tests and segregated the children, and "for the sake of uniformity" the director thought that teachers should have a document outlining official policy and giving canned answers to objections from parents. Public relations was tricky: "blunt references to 'mental deficiency' or 'feeble-mindedness' should be avoided." Instead it was better to talk about the opportunity for "special instruction" or "how the school must meet the problem of individual differences."[50]

Sometimes teachers were skeptical, too. In Los Angeles "the task of converting these 'sinners'" fell to a principal who sought to convince them that tests were not "composed in the darkroom of a rat-infested laboratory by some 'exchange professor' who could not speak English." One of the main selling points to teachers was that the impressive and seemingly objective numbers used in IQ and standardized tests made it easier to convince irate parents that their child's mark in a class or the grade placement was fair.[51]

The early advocates of using IQ tests in school administration urged that they be employed to segregate students by ability, to aid in vocational guidance, to detect unusually able or retarded students, and to diagnose learning problems. In 1925 the U.S. Bureau of Education told how 215 cities used intelligence tests (35 of these cities had populations of 100,000 or more). The group IQ tests were most heavily used in the elementary grades, and there primarily for administrative purposes: 64 percent of the cities used IQ tests to classify students into homogeneous groups (62 percent used them to supplant the teachers' estimates of ability); 46 percent used them to diagnose the causes of pupils' failures as opposed to 19 percent to diagnose causes of success; tests were more often used to compare the efficiency of teachers or of school systems than to guide changes in curriculum or methods. In junior high school and high school group tests continued to be used to organize classes by ability, but they also became important in guiding students in the choice of courses and careers. Cities employed individual intelligence tests largely to diagnose serious learning problems and to sort our subnormal children. In 1926 a U.S. Bureau of Education survey discovered that 36 or 40 used ability grouping in some or all elementary grades and a slightly smaller percent used ability grouping in junior and senior high schools. As Terman had predicted, the intelligence testing movement was transforming administrative practice in urban schools.[52]

What this means in practice we can examine in case studies of individual school systems. One of the first cities to use IQ tests in massive reorganizations of the schools was Detroit. Detroit had been a leader in standardized testing in such subjects as mathematics. The large staff of the Psychological Clinic of the Detroit schools -- eleven psychological examiners --- developed and tested a new intelligence examination for six-year-olds in the spring and summer of 1920 and in September of that year they gave it to 11,000 children entering first grade. On the basis of scores on that test they divided the pupils into three groups: X, the top 20 percent; Y, the middle 60 percent; and Z, the bottom 20 percent. The Y group then pursued the regular curriculum while the X group had an enriched course of study and the Z group a simplified one. Since tests measured "fundamental differences in native ability," the Detroit testers were confident that the intelligence test was an invaluable "instrument of classification; it establishes the intelligence-group to which the pupil will almost surely be found to belong and in which there is every reason to believe, other things being equal, that he will do his best work."[53]

Terman thought Oakland's experiment in classification by tests was "the best hope for a satisfactory solution of the problem of individual differences" in educational administration. His student, Virgil Dickson, was director of research in that city and carried out a massive program to differentiate students through testing. In a study of why children failed to be promoted, Dickson concluded that "mental tests given to nearly 30,000 children in Oakland prove conclusively that the proportion of failures due chiefly to mental inferiority is nearer 90 percent than 50 percent." The obvious solution, he said, was to track students, and it was the invariable testimony of teachers in charge of special limited classes, where pupils of similar mental ability have been grouped together, that these pupils behave better, work better, and accomplish more than they did under the former classification with the regular grade pupils." Dickson's rule was to "find the mental ability of the pupil and place him where he belongs," which meant in practice to direct him into one of five tracks from "accelerated" to "atypical." The standards for placement were based on the student population of the whole city, so that one school in a poor part of the city had more than 50 percent in "limited" (or slow) classes and only a rare child for an accelerated class, while another in a rich neighborhood had more than half in fast classes and only 3 percent in a limited class.[54]

Since "pupils of inferior intelligence" were "the ones who drop out" of the junior high school grades, special tracks were devised for them which would give them "instruction aimed definitely toward civic and social relationships required of useful members of society" and hold them in school by offering them vocational training in subjects like sheet metal work, agricultural work, sewing, and cooking. Removing these pupils "from the regular classes relieves both the teacher and the class of a great weight." Dickson said that this "policy of segregation" should continue in senior high school since secondary education faced the responsibility "of 'educating' a large number of pupils who are of high school age but are admittedly unable to cope with the requirements of the standard high school curriculum." Such a "system is more democratic than former systems," he concluded, because it offers to every child a freer opportunity to use his full capacity."[55]

Dickson quoted some reactions of administrators and teachers to the new system. The assistant superintendent in Oakland praised the new system of mental testing as "the most important factor in effective educational administration that has been introduced in recent years" and "a prime agent for educational efficiency and economy." A principal thought it a great advantage to "segregate the slow, misfit children." A teacher commented in language reminiscent of an evangelical revival that "tests have thrown floods of light on problems that have hitherto baffled me. I have felt my way in darkness as to what should be done in many cases. Now I proceed with more light." The new plan even created some humorous moments, Dickson said, as when a substitute teacher unaware of the changes took over fast and a slow English sections. 'It was a school joke until the end of the second day, when she reported, "There must be some mistake, because all of the "stupids" seemed to be in one class.'"[56]

Smaller cities joined the testing movement with equal fervor to that of Oakland. Superintendent C.R. Tupper of Miami, Arizona, a copper mining city of 10,000 inhabitants, was bothered by the high rate of "retardation" of pupils and hired a tester from Stanford to give group intelligence tests to all children in the second through eighth grades. When the results were assembled in charts in colored inks, Tupper discovered that "there was practically no retardation"--

that is, children were actually performing at their mental level (or in other words, the fault lay not in the teachers but in the genes of the children). Half of the pupils were of Mexican background; for the most part these were the pupils who tested low, did poorly in school and dropped out early. The obvious solution was to create a special vocational curriculum for Mexicans in their segregated classrooms.[57]

Energetically, Tupper undertook "a 'selling campaign' ... subsequent to regrouping, in order to make the program 'stick.'" He held teachers' meetings in which he quoted "the opinions of leading educators ... in order to acquaint them with the trend of expert opinion." He emphasized that teachers' judgments tended to be subjective and told them "that it is a part of every teacher's professional duty to become familiar with the nature, purpose, and use of tests." He fed articles to the newspaper which showed that the new method of grouping resulted in "a very considerable saving, both financial and human." He spoke to the Rotary Club with illustrations on multicolored charts. He maintained that the plan of grouping children by "homogeneous mental development" and giving them a "diversified course of study adapted to class groups" was the only way to cope with "the shifting nature of the school enrollment and ... the wide diversity in ability, mental development, character, social position, and previous training of the cosmopolitan enrollment in the Miami schools." He did not say how the Mexican population reacted to the new way to meet "individual differences." Professor Terman was pleased with Tupper's "initiative and courage."[58]

In another small city another superintendent was putting mental tests to work to differentiate his school system, using much the same pattern that Tupper followed: hiring an examiner, making the charts, setting up tracks, revising the curriculum. He found some interesting correlations between ethnicity and ability. In the slow track 63 percent of the pupils wer children of immigrants, 36 percent in the "normal" group, and 26 percent in the fast. Some parents objected to the classifications, but did not protest to the officials; that's just what you would expect, said Corning, from parents who "do not come to the schools and learn what is being done for their children." Teachers were generally pleased with the plan, he said, although they should be rotated out of the slow classes "for a year or two in order to relieve any strain that might result from continued work with defective children."[59]

"Defective children" was the theme of much research into the relation between ethnicity and intelligence done after the supposed revelations of the army tests. As David Cohen found in his review of the research on the educational achievement and intelligence of immigrants in the schools, studies in the 1920's and 1930's fairly consistently found that certain immigrant groups had disproportionate rates of over-age pupils and drop-outs; and some groups, like Italian and Polish schoolchildren, scored very low on group IQ tests (typically Italian students averaged about 85). While some educators, like the outstanding humanist Leonard Covello, probed deep into the sub-cultures of these groups to understand the dynamics of family and community life that explained failure in conventional schools, others accepted the test scores as signs of innate inferiority.[60]

In a study of schoolchildren of Italian, Portuguese, and Mexican extraction in San Jose, California, and neighboring communities, Kimball Young clearly showed where the hereditarian view of "inferior races" could lead in education. Young proposed to determine whether the poor showing of these "latin" pupils in schools was "due: (a) to their alleged language handicap, or (b) to the lack of native mental endowment." Since he believed that IQ tests did by and large validly indicate "native mental endowment" and that general intelligence was transmitted by heredity "and hence exist relatively independent of the effects of environment," his task was simple. He only had to demonstrate that the "latins" were far behind grade level proportionately, and that their IQ scores were low. Having shown this to his satisfaction, and convincing himself that the disparities were not accounted for by differences in language, he then turned to the implications for the schools.[61]

Here he encountered the problem that the traditional rhetoric had stressed a common school, with common learnings; the new rhetoric of the testers talked of individual differences as the key to differentiation; but Young had apparently discovered inerasable ethnic disparities. He fudged: "the problem for the school administrator is not fundamentally one of race but of the educability of all the pupils with whom he deals. Of course, if the bulk of the mentally retarded in any given school system, such as San Jose, turn out to be of Latin stock, then in one sense the question does involve racial differences." Whether residence here will raise intelligence or not, immigration will bring "retarded material which the public schools have to handle" and educators have no choice but "to care for the on-coming generations from these inferior stocks" already here. A new set of policies must grow from studies of intelligence and consideration of "what the children of the present will be doing in later life in industry or agriculture or business."[62]

Young then outlined what such a new policy for San Jose might look like. All children would take group intelligence tests and be assigned to classes according to ability. A new research director should be appointed to supervise the work. The first need in curriculum revision was to prepare "Children for their proper economic life activities in accordance with their abilities," also giving them "the intellectual and moral heritage of the past ... so far as they can assimilate it." The public must abandon "the ideal that education wipes out all differences... and the older notion of Plato, if you please, adopted, that education is for selection." It was clear that the Latins would mostly be made of iron, the gold composed of more favored stocks. Young suggested that educators investigate how colonial groups "of like racial extraction" were being grained "in the Philippines, Hawaii and Puerto Rico."[63]

On a note of uplift Young urged schoolmen in San Jose to use the school as a means of building a sense of community and of rehabilitating "those social values upon which our political structure rests. There, he said, people can come to "learn anew the human values of neighborhood co-operation and common purpose."[64]

A man who could write that "the original American settlers in the Santa Clara valley were almost entirely of North European ancestry" -- surely a surprise to the Mexican Californios -- could not be expected to realize that the "Latins" had their own deep loyalties of family and community that the public school was threatening to disrupt (this was one reason why some parents of these children sought to evade the truant officers in the valley). Furthermore, as Covello and other writers have shown -- and as we shall examine later -- there was often a profound dissonance between the values and mores of the Italian or Mexican family or youthful peer group and the behavior rewarded in school. Indeed, the Italian girl who did not leave school to help the family was often regarded as selfish; the Italian boy who tried hard to please the woman teacher was often ridiculed by his friends; for both, the school led nowhere desirable. The routine competition according to impersonal norms in school, the kind of quick, abstract verbalism often rewarded there, the kinds of knowledge and skills sampled on intelligence and achievement tests -- these often seemed part of an alien and unattractive world to the kinds of immigrants' children who did poorly on intelligence tests.[65]

Of course not all educators and surely not all citizens fell in march with the intelligence testing movement in the schools. A professor of educational psychology at the University of Minnesota warned that credulous educators accept "mental tests as a mysterious instrument with which they are able within thirty minutes to judge a high school pupil's value to society." "It is not possible, I think," wrote Walter Lippmann, "to imagine a more contemptible proceeding than to confront a child with a set of puzzles, and after an hour's monkeying with them, proclaim to the child, or to his parents, that here is a C individual." Such a process would be not only contemptible but inane, Lippmann thought, for "all that can be claimed for the tests is that they can be used to classify children into a homogeneous group the children whose capacities for school work are at a particular moment fairly similar." There was nothing wrong with using the tests to fit the child into the school, he thought, but the broader social implications of the movement alarmed him. "If, for example, the impression takes root that these tests really measure intelligence, that they constitute a sort of last judgment on the child's capacity, that they reveal scientifically his predestined ability, then it would be a thousand times better if all the intelligence testers and all their questionnaires were sunk without warning in the Sargasso sea."[66]

It was precisely broad potential uses of tests that deeply antagonized the members of the Chicago Federation of Labor. In 1924 the Federation adopted a slashing report on testing that attacked in particular the use of tests in vocational guidance. Ever since the psychologists had discovered correlations between IQ scores and occupations in the army tests, experts like Terman had repeatedly suggested that data on "intelligence" be used not only for classifying students into homogeneous groups but also for channeling them into curricula and occupations could be ranked by the intelligence needed, from professional and business on down to unskilled labor. The members of the Federation reacted bitterly: "the alleged 'mental levels,' representing natural ability, it will be seen, correspond in a most startling way to the social levels of the groups named. It is as though the relative social positions of each group are determined by an irresistible natural law." The Chicago research department added figures showing that the scores of children pursuing the different curricula did match the levels required in the occupations to which the schooling led, with two-year vocational students on the bottom. "The selection of courses," said the Federation statement, "is naturally determined very largely by the social and economic status of the pupil." Poor children can only afford to go to secondary school for two years, while well-off parents can send their children to college. "Here again the so-called 'mental level' ascertained by the 'intelligence tests' corresponds in an astounding exactness with the social and economic status of the family," said the unions. "Has a new natural law been discovered which binds each individual to a place in society and against which struggle is hopeless?" The Federation saw nothing new in the testers' claims, but rather "the ancient doctrine of caste." They said that "developments in other cities show the classification of pupils into so-called 'superior' and 'inferior' groups, the former of which are encouraged by official 'counselors' to go on into the high school while the latter are advised by these 'vocational counselors' to end their school life at the age of fifteen years when the average child graduates from 'junior high.'" Labor saw this as a "brand of inferiority ... placed upon all productive workers through the medium of propaganda emanating from the public school."[67]

As rhetoric escalated on both sides in the 1920's, scholars developed a more sophisticated understanding of "intelligence" and schools went on making discriminations among pupils through testing. Sometimes these discriminations were subtle and designed to diagnose and prescribe for individual children with severe learning problems. Sometimes they gave a disguise of benign rationality to racism. But perhaps the most significant result of the testing movement was that the notion of great and measurable differences in intellectual capacity became part of the conventional wisdom not only of school people but of the public -- a development so pervasive in its influence that it is exceedingly difficult to perceive today how people conceived of differences in cognitive performance before scientists taught us to think of this as a function of "intelligence." Even if the scientists' ideas about "intelligence" were entirely capricious -- which they surely are not -- the testing movement in the schools would have had enormous effects because of the way in which scores influenced the behavior of professionals and the self-concept of the children who lived in classrooms.

Human differences are a glorious fact of life. The problem with the discriminations schoolmen made was not that they paid attention to differences, but that the technology of discrimination was so limited in scope and that they so often confused "individual" variation with gross inequalities associated with poverty, oppression on the basis of color, or other features of the multiple sub-cultures of a highly plural society. "Is the place of the so-called lower classes in the social and industrial scale the result of their inferior native endowment," asked Terman, "or is their apparent inferiority merely a result of their inferior home and school training?" This was a view from the top down, the very way of phrasing the question implying a a standard that the tester could determine. In Michigan a psychologist noted that Italians who worked in grim conditions in mines scored unusually low on IQ tests. "The employers of labor in these locations recognize the low mentality of their employees, and one of them stated frankly that men of higher intelligence would not remain in the location because of the character of the work." Why did their children score low on tests? Different people had different answers. The easiest answer to social injustice was to blame the victim.[69]

4. Victims Without "Crimes"

"If every child who fails of promotion were coated in black," wrote Oakland research director, Virgil Dickson, about "mental tests and the inferior child," "we would have at least one out of every four thus labeled before the first grade had been finished." By the sixth grade "more than one half of our children would thus have earned a coat of black, many of them several coats." To have been born black was normally to have been labeled a failure -- an inferiority all too often justified by a bogus science -- as millions of Negro children learned in school systems which were consciously or unwittingly racist. Black Americans had the misfortune to arrive in northern cities in large numbers at a time when centralization had undermined ward school politics, when educators were increasingly empowered to make classifications of pupils according to their notion of what was best for the client, when the results of biased tests were commonly accepted as proof of native ability, when those in control of schooling generally agreed that the function of schools was to sort and train students to fit into the existing order, and when much writing in education and social science tended to portray black citizens as a "social problem," linked in research and library classification schemes with delinquency, prostitution and disease-- when they were treated at all. Sociologists often saw blacks as cripples. Thus it was no accident that a leading northern educational statesman would write, as we have earlier seen, that segregated schools might be wise for "defective, delinquent, over-aged and Negro" children. Indeed, while northern white educators wrote copiously about immigrants, the administrative progressives were, for the most part, strangely silent about black children. The inferior status of blacks was a fact of life to which the schools in their "realism" must adjust.[70]

When a number of black educators bitterly attacked such acquiescence to racism, they were joined by white allies who refused to believe that the promise of American education did not extend to Negroes. Indeed, such leaders believed that the victimization of blacks presented an agenda for reform, not of education alone but of the entire society. The normal rhetoric of "democratic education" sounded weird when set against the social reality the black child knew. "As long as Negroes are the victims of lynching, police brutality, disfranchisement, residential covenants, higher rents, segregation, unsanitary living conditions, meager recreational opportunities, and other forms of discrimination," wrote one educator, "the social-civic aim of education is defeated." Doxey Wilkerson, one of Gunnar Myrdal's staff members, argued that the task of "differentiating" education for black children was to discover what Negroes should know and do about such injustices as job discrimination, economic exploitation, denial of civil liberties, high rates of disease and death, stereotypes of inferiority, and inadequate opportunities for education.[71]

Such a militant use of schooling won few converts in the years from 1900 to 1940, however. Three studies by educators on the "adjustment" of schools to the black community reveal more common ways of translating the success story of the administrative progressives into an appropriate form of Negro education. In 1921, Berlinda Davidson studies the schooling of blacks in the San Francisco Bay region. She found that all but a handful of the 393 Negro men in her sample were working at unskilled jobs as laborers, janitors, porters, and the like, but 18 percent of these had attended high school and 9 percent college. Among those who had attended college were 11 common laborers and 23 others in blue-collar occupations. The number of years of education had little correlation with the type of work the black men pursued, nor were skilled workers able to follow their trades because of discrimination in unions. After giving such proof that acquiring a skill or years of schooling did not pay off for the fathers, she went on to urge that all children be given intelligence tests to see if they were qualified for "(1) professional classes, (2) semi-professional classes, (3) ordinary skilled workers, (4) semiskilled workers, (5) unskilled workers." After talking of the poverty and multiple problems children faced simply to survive, she accounted for the high number of over-aged children by their "low mentality," quoting Dickson's doctrine that "there is one cause of retardation that is preponderant and that cause is low mental level." In the teachers' comments explaining the failure of the black children, again and again the phrase "low mental level" cropped up, nudging "laziness" and "indifference" as favorite labels.[72]

In 1928 a Cincinnati principal, Mary Holloway, studied how to relate her junior high school to a black community characterized by "low economic status ... crowded living conditions, false standards of conduct, and general lack of intelligence ...." One important task was proper guidance about sex, since over half the girls first learned the facts of life from friends, meaning that "but a small minority have a sane, healthy attitude toward the subject because of a lack of scientific knowledge and terminology on the part of the informants." In other ways, too, the school should guide the morals and mores of the girls, acting in loco parentis. But "realism" was the order of the day in fitting children into the economy. She advocated Terman's plan of using IQ tests to give proper vocational guidance and felt that students should give up the idea of becoming nurses since the local training schools discriminated against blacks. The best job available to most black girls was domestic service, but even here whites were taking over the field. "While racial prejudice is given by the Negro girl as the cause for this discrimination, they themselves are often at fault. The great gap existing between their home environment and the one in which they seek to find employment, is possibly the greatest handicap in qualifying for efficient domestic service." Hence the school should remedy that cultural deprivation and fit the girls to work for rich folk.[73]

In 1920, Philip a. Boyer tried to apply "the principles of efficiency underlying scientific management in industry" to a Philadelphia elementary school that enrolled almost 80 percent black children. He felt it unnecessary to adapt the school to the Caucasian children since they were "representative of average middle-class whites. Special treatment ... has therefore been regarded as unnecessary." Blacks, however, were different: the "excess of females in the Negro population" and the large proportion of unmarried men present "difficult social and moral problems"; housing was unsanitary, and crowding and lodgers created moral dangers; 58.3 percent of Negro women worked, thereby disrupting home life; "studies of the psychology of the Negro point to a somewhat lower than average mentality, less subject to the inhibitions of the higher mental powers"; and the "social life of the negro is too much outside the home." It was hard to get the children to come to school because of the "indifference of parents," an opinion "often acknowledged by them without the least concern." But the truant offers persisted, serving 174 notices of prosecution on parents and actually indicting 55. These black parents were partially responsible for the 42 percent of children who were over-age, since they were likely to "permit or encourage irregular attendance at school." Nonetheless, a school social worker, Boyer said "has done much to improve home conditions in order that a satisfactory basis for successful school work can be established." He then went on to recommend that the school classify pupils more carefully by ability and institute opportunity classes and ungraded work, stressing pre-vocational skills and proper attitudes. Most important "in a school with the social conditions described above, the work of the school should be punctuated throughout with such moral attributes as regularity, punctuality, responsibility, neatness, accuracy, tenacity of purpose, truthfulness, honesty and purity of thought and action." The end result would be a community school "'Vitalized' and 'Magnified'" which would "become the great democratic socializing agency.'"[74]

Although Boyer and his fellow educators had sincere concern about the "Negro problem," their response was not to try to use the school to expose and correct the racism of American society but rather to "adjust" the black child to the white middle-class norms educators accepted unquestioningly. At the same time, their trust in the statistics on "retardation" and in intelligence tests made them locate the cause of school failure in the child or in his family and neighborhood. The classification of Negro children often reflected these same assumptions. In Cleveland, for example, 25 percent of the children assigned to "special classes" for defective children in 1923 were black, while only about 4 percent were white. Likewise, 50 percent of all work permits issued to Negro girls in that city were marked "retarded," signifying that the students had not "passed the seventh grade by reason of mental retardation." By contrast, only 4 percent of all native-born white children received "retarded" work permits. Some indication of the trouble black children faced in that city is the fact that in the Kinsman School 24 children were absent in 1930 because they had no shoes, 12 for lack of clothing. Coming mostly from terrible schools in the South, they struggled against great odds to keep up with their age-mates. Black children were refused entrance to commercial and academic schools because of low scores on IQ tests even though their grades were superior; one administrator told a Negro mother that a high score was necessary "to keep the lower elements out."[75]

Educators puzzled about what sort of vocational education to give black students. In the theory accepted by many of the administrative progressives, the school system sorted out students by ability and probable careers and educated them accordingly. This presupposed an economic order that would be open to talented recruits from the lower ranks of society; indeed, the notion of a school-filtered meritocracy was becoming the twentieth-century version of the self-made man ideology. But for blacks such a system mostly did not work, for racism in the unions of skilled workers and in white-collar occupations tended to freeze out Negroes. The job ceiling kept blacks mostly in unskilled, hard, dirty, dead-end occupations that no one else wanted. Succeeding waves of lower-class immigrants -- Irish, Italians, French Canadians -- had also begun in such jobs, but by the second or third generation white immigrants entered a great variety of occupations. The deep prejudice against employing black Americans in white-collar or skilled jobs thus frustrated using the schools to promote selective mobility of the talented.

Were schoolmen simply to accept the low job ceiling as a given and to prepare Negroes to be good janitors and housekeepers? If so, how much and what kind of schooling did a janitor really need? Or was it the duty of schoolmen to open up new career opportunities for black graduates, to perforate the job ceiling to let talented individuals slip through? Or did such piecemeal progress simply postpone the major reconstruction of society that would create genuine equality for blacks? During the years from 1890 to 1940 some schoolmen adopted each of these alternative ways of coping with the relation of schooling to employment for black students, but most appear to have accepted the racism of unions and employers as a fact they could do little about.[76]

A number of observers in the early twentieth century believed that the occupational level of blacks in northern cities had declined rather than advanced in the previous half century. Many former slaves and free blacks were skilled craftsmen who were barred from their trades by unions or by industrial developments that made the crafts obsolete. In a number of cities immigrants cornered a large share of occupations formerly available to Negroes, such as catering, barbering, and the more skilled forms of domestic service. A black principal in New York, William Bulkley, observed that "if a boy ... wants to learn a trade he must commit a crime," for only in a reformatory could a black child acquire a manual skill since in business he "runs sheer up against a stone wall." What could Bulkley reply to the talented black child who wanted to leave school to help his mother and who said that "there is nothing better for a colored boy to do if he finished the course"? "I shall remember that scene till my dying day," Bulkley wrote. "All the monster evils of prejudice passed before me like the hideous creatures of an Inferno, and I thought of the millions of hopes that have been blighted, the myriads of human possibilities that have been crushed, the intellects that have been stunted, the moral lives that have been gnarled and twisted, all because the iron heel of this base, hell-born caste is upon the neck of every boy, of every girl who chanced to be born black."

Bulkley and some allies among Negroes and white liberals formed an organization to create new job opportunities for blacks in the city; this group became the forerunner of the National Urban League. But the task of overcoming prejudice was enormous; in 1915, a social investigator reported that in New York "there was a general belief among school principals, social workers, and colored clergymen that the restriction of industrial opportunities because of their race was sapping the ambition of the colored boys and girls, and that they were not making the effort put out by their parents and grandparents to secure an education." Again and again principals told her of their failure to place highly qualified black graduates in positions as clerk, machinists' apprentice, dressmaking, and other trades.[77]

As Negro enrollment in high schools soared in the 1920's and 1930's, and as the practice of vocational guidance became more firmly institutionalized in urban schools, a number of studies examined the connection between schooling and vocation for blacks. Literacy among blacks increased from 42.9 percent in 1890 to 90 percent in 1940; Negro high school enrollment jumped from 19,242 in 1917-18 to 254,580 in 1939-40 (an increase from 1.6 percent of total black enrollment to 10.5 percent). In a study of about 20,000 black high school graduates and non-graduates, the U.S. Office of Education's expert on Negro education, Ambrose Caliver, found that the more schooling a black person achieved, the more dissatisfied he was with his job. The reasons for this are not far to seek: study after study showed that black students aspired to professional or other white collar occupations that were closed to all but that small number who could make a living serving the needs of the black community or find one of the relatively few jobs available in the civil service. In Minneapolis there were no black counselors for Negro children, and white counselors had little knowledge of the "job outlook for Negroes." The career choices of Negro schoolboys in that city differed sharply from the actual patterns of employment of black men: 58.6 percent of the male students chose professional jobs, whereas only 4.4 percent of men were so employed in 1935; 70.1 percent of Negro employees worked in unskilled jobs, whereas only 2.5 percent of boys selected unskilled positions. Parents shared similarly high aspirations for their children's careers. The choices of careers bore little relation to scores on IQ tests or to occupation trends among Negro workers.[78]

Given the great disparity between aspirations and actual career opportunities, the attitudes of guidance officers and principals towards the curriculum choices and careers of black students became an especially crucial influence. In the mid-1930's Virginia Daniels made a survey of 159 secondary schools in all parts of the nation enrolling black students to determine "Attitudes Affecting the Occupational Affiliation of Negroes." Her data revealed few differences between the opinions of northern and southern schoolmen on the key issues (most respondents from the southern schools were black). For that reason the figures for North and South will be combined here, and her two top categories of agreement, "generally" and "frequently" will be merged in the table below:

PERCENTAGE OF AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS

1.	"There are very few Negro employers in the community; hence Negro youths must look to white employers for work and accept such limitations as are thereby imposed."	96.2
2.	"Union membership is denied to Negroes; they are thus prevented from entering occupations which are controlled by trade unions."	69.8
3.	"Employers refuse to accept Negroes for the more socially desirable jobs, regardless of qualifications of ability and character."	92.4
4.	"Promotion is denied to Negroes because of the insistence that inspectors, sub-foremen, and foremen -- men vested with minority authority -- must be white."	88.7
5.	"It is believed that members of the Negro race are ill-adapted for work with machines."	50.3
6.	"It is believed that all Negroes are persons of a low order of ability."	57.2
7.	"It is believed that Negroes are inefficient or irresponsible or both."	65.4
8.	"Various groups exert pressure on employers to retain white workers or to displace Negroes with whites."	54.1
9.	"Employers hire no Negroes because they fear there will be racial friction if white and Negro workers are employed in the same plant."	42.2
10.	"The spirit of the community is to keep Negroes at the bottom of the economic scale where wages are the lowest and jobs are the most hazardous."	58.5

It was only on the last question that there was a decided difference of opinion between northern and southern respondents, 39 and 79.2 percent respectively.[79]

Daniel reported that schoolmen largely agreed that Negro students aspired to positions well above those designated for them by racist communities, despite their recognition that they might have to accept the common conception of "Negro jobs." The most talented students especially chafed under the limitations. "Respondents in five cities had comments to make concerning this attitude of acceptance of 'Negro jobs,'" she wrote. "From East Orange, New Jersey, comes the statement that Negroes seldom accept it while in school but 'after school.' The guidance officers of Philadelphia, Pa., feel that it is accepted by all Negroes 'except those who have initiative,' while those of Milwaukee, Wis., feel that Negroes 'indirectly accept because they feel their lot is hopeless. From Okmulgee, Okla., comes the statement, 'We insist on this as a matter of principle.' In Huntington, W. Va., it is felt that 'they recognize the community concepts but seldom accept them as final.'"[80]

Both in their reaction to the questions about prejudice in hiring and in their individual comments, schoolmen made it clear that they recognized that equality of opportunity was a lie for black Americans. They saw the human cost and the pain. Should schools prepare Negro students for careers not yet open to them? If they didn't, how could blacks ever extend their scope of employment? Was it the task of schoolmen to fight racism in the community? About 73 percent of northern respondents said that they agreed that counselors should "attempt positively to dispel racial prejudice so as to provide a wider range of occupational opportunities" for blacks, yet only one-third thought it advisable for Negroes "to organize their power as consumers to force occupational openings from white-owned businesses which now depend on Negro buyers." And almost one-third of counselors in the North thought that blacks should "be counseled merely to enter those lines of work in which there is reasonable expectancy of obtaining employment."[81]

Here and there a few school people aggressively sought to place Negroes in "non-Negro" jobs. Lloyd M. Cofer, a counselor in Detroit, fought "to break down the occupational barriers" against blacks in skilled trades by putting pressure on the United Auto Workers: "we told them that opening the doors of skilled trades to Negroes would do more good than all the speeches they could make or organizers they could hire if they were really sincere about recruiting blacks into the union." A group of teachers in Philadelphia made the rounds among manufacturers, union leaders, and public and private employment agencies to drum up opportunities for unemployed blacks and to expand the range of jobs Negroes could fill. In New York, a black schoolwoman, Elise Johnson McDougald, successfully fought both with a bigoted principal of the Manhattan Trade School and with employers to admit and hire more black girls in millinery and dressmaking departments. The activist Doxey A. Wilkerson attacked those who "proclaim vociferously that the proper role of vocational guidance -- as in the case of all education -- is to adjust the individual as best it can to prevailing mores of the occupational world, and not to seek its reconstruction."82

One measure of the willingness of school systems to counteract racism in the job market was the hiring of black teachers and other employees. Most systems failed this test badly. There was no shortage of trained black teachers -- teaching was one of the favorite career choices of black high school girls, and there were many training programs for black teachers both in North and South. Precise data on the number of black teachers in northern cities is impossible to find, since most school reports did not list teachers by race, but in 1940 Doxey Wilkerson gathered good estimates from teachers and civic leaders in various black communities. He found that in 18 of the 20 cities with more than 7,000 black inhabitants there were some Negro teachers. In 28 cities in his sample with fewer than 7,000, however, only 4 employed black teachers. These are his figures for a dozen cities with a large black population:

City	Negro Population 1930	Blacks on Instructional & Administrative Staff
New York	327,706	Over 800
Chicago	233,903	About 300
Detroit	120,066	" 80
Cleveland	71,899	" 78
Pittsburg	54,938	" 3
Cincinnati	47,818	" 148
Los Angeles	38,894	" 54
Newark	38,880	" 11
Columbus	32,774	" 75
Springfield, Ill.	20,000	None
Boston	20,574	?
Dayton	17,077	About 80

The figures offer an interesting study in contrasts. The N.A.A.C.P. praised the New York system for hiring black teachers without prejudice on grounds of merit. As Mary Herrick has shown, the black community in Chicago enjoyed a fair degree of political power through its support of the Thompson machine (though it did not receive its proportionate share of the more prestigious or lucrative positions at the disposition of the machine). Of the remaining cities, Cincinnati, Columbus, and Dayton stand out as relatively prominent employers of black teachers and also as systems which hired a number of black administrators quite disproportionate to these hired in the other cities. In 1928, Jennie Porter gathered information on hiring of black professionals in a large number of northern cities and discovered that the only cities in her sample which had a substantial percentage of black teachers and principals in proportion to the Negro population were New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Gary, and Indianapolis. What most of these cities had in common, in contrast with the many cities with no black professionals, or only a handful, was that there was generally a high degree of conscious segregation of black pupils in separate schools -- and normally black teachers were only allowed to teach in these institutions.[83]

Philadelphia is a case in point (though Cincinnati, Gary or Indianapolis would serve as well). In 1907, Superintendent Martin Brumbaugh wrote that separate buildings for black children with Negro teachers had accomplished two purposes: "First, it has given to the colored child better opportunity to move at its own rate of progress through the materials of the curriculum, which rate of progress is in some respect different from the rate of progress of other children. Second, it has enabled the Board of Education to give employment to a group of deserving members of the colored race ...." He believed that "wherever possible separate schools should be inaugurated for the colored children." The desire of this administrative progressive to segregate black children because of their alleged mental differences coincided, then, with job opportunities for Negro teachers. In 1940, Clara Hardin found the same plan in basic operation. "To a Negro born and reared in New York City, where no records are kept by color of students," she wrote, "and where Negro teachers may teach classes of white children in the public schools, the system of allowing the all-Negro schools to continue in Philadelphia may appear to be a form of 'Jim Crowism.' The Philadelphia Negro leaders are usually reticent on the subject, especially with outsiders." But she argued that "one can scarcely blame those who are employed in the school for keeping silent and wishing to maintain the status quo. They know that a majority of the 360 Negro women and 92 men who were employed as teachers in Philadelphia, in 1940, would be replaced by white teachers, if mixed schools became the rule." Their main strategy was to have black teachers appointed to the desegregated high schools.[84]

One reason why many cities had few black teachers was that superintendents buckled before white protest. A leading administrative progressive, Frank Spaulding, described his way of assigning black teachers when he was superintendent in Cleveland: "I had been surprised to find that my staff included about sixty colored teachers. In none of my previous superintendencies was there a single colored teacher." The old hands in Cleveland told him that the policy was to take "advantage of the fact that among the city's numerous nationalities ... there were some sections in which no objection was made to the color of teachers ...." When the black novelist Charles Chesnutt protested this policy, Spaulding told him that he would not debate "abstract principle" with him, and that it was simply his job "to see that the schools operate as efficiently as possible. Efficiency demands harmony and cooperation ...." When whites rejected black teachers, that destroyed "harmony and cooperation."

Judging from the prejudices of many white teachers in Cleveland at that time, black parents had their own cause for protest. About 1930 a word association test was given to 200 teachers who taught in predominately black schools in the city. The word "Negro" was mentioned, and the teachers put down the first thought that came to mind. Here are the responses: slavery--43; antipathy--39; color--18; sympathy--4; music--4; and so on through a list of mainly negative nouns and adjectives.[86]

Indeed, many blacks were profoundly ambivalent about having Negro children taught in mixed schools by white teachers. As the volumes of The Crisis and the voluminous files of the N.A.A.C.P. attest, blacks vigorously fought dozens of attempts by whites to segregate them in cities and towns all over the nation, for they knew from bitter experience that separate schools in the South had been almost invariable unequal. Lacking direct political power -- for there were only a tiny number of cities where there were blacks on school boards or where they had influence proportional to their numbers -- they turned to the courts to defend the meager equity that integration promised. But again and again blacks expressed in autobiographies and poems, in truancy and protest, their sense of rejection in schools dominated by a white power structure over which they had little influence.[87]

No one had more skillfully punctured the arguments of white segregationists in the North than W.E.B. DuBois. In an article in 1929, he criticized L.A. Pechstein of the University of Cincinnati, who together with his students had tried to build a case for the superior education black children could gain in all-black schools. DuBois rejected the argument that black children were inferior and therefore needed special treatment: "their poverty is part of a universal problem; their retardation is due to wretched Southern school systems; their dullness comes from poor food and poor homes and there is absolutely no proof that it is Negroid." He pointed out that separate schools would inexorably become "less well-housed, less well-supported, less well-equipped and less well-supervised than the average public school." Segregation was a denial of democracy and could produce only unending hatred and conflict: the black man educated apart "is going to believe that the world of white folk is armed against the world of black folk, and that one of these days they are going to fight it out to the bitter end."[88]

But by 1935 DuBois had concluded that "race prejudice in the United States today is such that most Negroes cannot receive proper education in white institutions." Although in some communities, blacks and whites could prosper in schools together, he believed, "there are many public school systems in the North where Negroes are admitted and tolerated, but they are not educated; they are crucified." For decades DuBois and other Negroes like Carter Woodson had been discovering and teaching the black heritage and he was convinced that the "main problem of Negro education will not be segregation but self-knowledge and self-respect." This search for power and self-definition might lead to a separation that was not imposed but sought.[89]

By 1940, Doxey Wilkerson believed that black education "in the North is characterized by tendencies toward structural separateness. This fact is seen in the fairly general exclusion of Negroes from policy-making and administrative functions in the public school system, the small number of Negro teachers, the definite trend toward the segregation of white and Negro pupils and teachers in separate schools, and in the more or less informal exclusion of white and Negro pupils and students from selected activities in schools and in institutions of higher education. Further, the degree of such separateness tends to be most pronounced in areas where the Negro population is relatively most heavily concentrated, and where the general social status of the Negro is lower than in the North as a whole." Whether sought or imposed, this structural separateness was to become massive as ghettos expanded in central cities after 1940; the poverty and racism that produced the nation within a nation became a bitter heritage for the future. Implicit and sometimes explicit in the "science" and the differentiation of education sought by the administrative progressives were some of the causes of this "structural separateness" of black education.[90] In 1902, John Dewey wrote that "it is easy to fall into the habit of regarding the mechanics of school organization and administration as something comparatively external and indifferent to educational purposes and ideals." We forget, he said, that it is such matters as the classifying of pupils, the way decisions are made, the manner in which the machinery of instruction bears on the child "that really control the whole system." There is today a crisis of confidence in the pattern of urban schooling, the structure of power and authority which developed at the turn of the twentieth century. Substantial segments of this society no longer believe in centralism as an effective response to human needs, no longer trust in an enlightened paternalism of elites, no longer accept the justice of the distribution of power along existing racial and class lines, and no longer think that technological change implies progress. To whom, and for what purposes, the schools should be accountable today remains the sharpest issue.[91]

FOOTNOTES

AND

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NOTES

Prologue

1. For some recent--and sometimes conflicting--interpretations of educational historiography, see Cremin, Cubberley; Greer, Great School Legend; Church, "History of Education as a Field of Study"; Sloan, "Historiography"; Beach, "History of Education"; Tyack, "New Perspectives," 22-42.

2. Scholars in sociology and political science have shown an increasing interest in schools. For introductions to the literature and research possibilities, see Brim, Sociology and the Field of Education; Bidwell, "The School as a Formal Organization," 972-1022; Kirst, ed., State, School and Politics.

3. On the value of comparative study of education, see Cremin, Cubberley, 50-51. See also Woodward, ed., Comparative Approach to American History.

4. Wiebe, Search for Order; Wiebe, "Social Functions of Public Education"; Wirth, "Urbanism"; Handlin, "Modern City," 1-26; Warner, "If All the World Were Philadelphia."

5. Gans, Urban Villagers; Merton, Social Theory, 387-420; Vidich and Bensman, Small Town.

6. Kimball and McClellan, Education and the New America; Berg, Education and Jobs.

7. Shepard, ed., Thoreau's Journals, 176-77.

8. N. Harris, review of Katz's Irony of Early School Reform; Greer, Great School Legend; Karier, "Liberalism"; Kozol, Free Schools.

Part One

1. Eggleston, Hoosier School-Master, 1; in A Son of the Middle Border (115) Hamlin Garland said that "Eggleston's characters were near neighbors."

2. This letter (not dated), together with a variety of records of a rural school in Ashland, is deposited in the O. C. Applegate Papers, Library of the University of Oregon; I am much indebted to Martin Schmitt for calling them to my attention. The present essay is adapted, in part, from an article published in Call Number (Spring 1966, 13-23), a periodical of the University of Oregon Library. For an account of an unsuccessful student strike in a rural school in Peoria, see Dalton, "Hinman's School, 1850," 174-75.

3. A number of the critical books and articles by professional educators will be cited below, as well as personal reminiscence about one-room schools.

4. Barber, Schoolhouse at Prairie View, 1.

5. Burton, District School, 107; Timothy Smith, "Protestant Schooling," 679-95; Tyack, "Kingdom of God and the Common School," 447-69; C. Johnson, Country School, passim.

6. Shatraw, "School Days," 68-71.

7. Ms. report of Ashland School, 1865, O. C. Applegate Papers; Peil, "Oregon School Days," 200.

8. Nelson, "Red Schoolhouse," 305; by comparison, five years later, in 1864-65, in Ashland, O. C. Applegate had a class of 33 children ranging in age from six to 18.

9. C. Johnson, Country School, 4, 56-57; Nelson, "Red Schoolhouse," 306; Hazard, Pioneer Teachers.

10. C. Johnson, Old Time Schools, 102.

11. Dick, Sod-House Frontier, ch. vi.

12. John Miller to Oliver Applegate, June 21, Aug. 15, 1863, O. C. Applegate Papers.

13. Dallas et al., comp., Lamplighters, 28, 129.

14. Kirkpatrick, Rural School, 39-40.

15. Peil, "Oregon School Days," 206.

16. Ellsbree, American Teacher; Beale, Freedom of Teaching.

17. John Miller to Oliver Applegate, Feb. 16, 1867, O. C. Applegate Papers.

18. It should be noted that there were many rural schools where neither the teachers nor the communities they served had any real power over education. Examples of such colonial, powerless institutions would be schools on Indian reservations, or rural black schools in the South, or schools attended by migratory workers' children. Such dispossessed groups rarely had any voice even in that bastion of participatory democracy, the rural school district.

19. For a general study of textbooks, see Elson, American Textbooks, esp. chs. vii-ix. In order as quoted above, a theme on "Idleness" by Mary Hanna in the student manuscript newspaper "The Banner"; an essay on "News Years" by the scholar signing himself "Pie Biter"; Francis Smith's public speech on "The Talent of Success"; and Charles Henry Hargadine's welcoming speech to parents--all written by students in Applegate's school and in O. C. Applegate Papers.

20. Freedman, ed., Walt Whitman, 69.

21. Darrow, *Farmington*, 59-69.

22. Dallas et al., comp., *Lamplighters*, 37.

23. Orne, *Country School*, 2, 14-15, *passim*. I am indebted to Dwain Preston for calling this play to my attention and for his perceptive comments on his own experience in a rural school. For a discussion of "culture" as a percolation from the top down see Handlin, *Dewey's Challenge to Education*, 27-39. Also for a perceptive discussion of the curriculum of the rural school see Kimball and McClellan, *Education and the New America*, chs. iv, v.

24. Letter of C. T. Lloyd to author, May 11, 1966.

25. Garland, *Son*, 112; cf. Foreword by Henry S. Commager, *McGuffey's Fifth Eclectic Reader, 1879 Edition*.

26. Masters, *Across Spoon River*, 39.

27. C. Johnson, *Old Time Schools*, 159.

28. Henry Cummins to Oliver Applegate, Feb. 17, 1863, O. C. Applegate Papers.

29. John Miller to Oliver Applegate, Apr. 15, 1863, O. C. Applegate Papers; Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Report for 1874*, 58-59.

30. Walter Myer, a pupil in Applegate's class, wrote a superb Faulkneresque essay called "A Hunt" in which he spoke admiringly about "a gun that would shoot fifteen times like Mr. Applegate has" (O. C. Applegate Papers).

31. Cubberley, *Rural Life and Education*, 105-106.

32. An excellent analysis of the ideology of reform is Keppel's "Myth of Agrarianism in Rural Educational Reform," 100-109.

33. Kirkpatrick, *Rural School*, 140-41.

34. Cubberley, *Rural Life and Education*, 55-56, 70-71, chs. ii-iv. Cubberley's analysis of the "rural school problem" and prescription for it were less romantic than those of the nature-lover L. H. Bailey and more condescending than some of the other crusaders like Mabel Carney, but he still expressed the point of view toward country schools predominant among educators.

35. Committee of Graduate School of Education, Nebraska, *Rural Teacher of Nebraska*, 27-28.

36. Eggleston and Bruere, *Work of the Rural School*, 20-21.

37. O. M. Smith, "Rural Social Center," 110.

38. Cubberley, *Rural Life and Education*, 106-107; Carney, *Country Life and Country School*, ch. ii.

39. Cubberley, Rural Life and Education, 113; for the role of one evangelist in awakening country people, see Shaw's account of Superintendent O. J. Kern's work in Illinois, "Common Sense Country Schools."

40. Committee of Twelve, "Report," I, 820-21.

41. As quoted in Raymer, "Superintendency in Oregon," 154-55.

42. Letter from Robert Ginther to ed., Portland Telegram, Oct. 23, 1922.

43. Raymer, "Superintendency in Oregon," 138.

44. Cubberley, Rural Life and Education, 306-307.

45. Arp, Rural Education and the Consolidated School, pp. viii, 27; compare with Carney, Country Life and Country School, 292-95.

46. Cubberley, Rural Life and Education, 183.

47. Joint Committee on Rural Schools, Rural School Survey of New York State, I, 257, 200ff.

48. Alford, "School District Reorganization," 355, 356-57; cf. Woodring, "One-Room School," 152.

49. West, Plainville, 80-81; on "institutionalization" see Selznick, Leadership in Administration, 5-22; for a recent study of the virtues of small high schools, see Gump and Barker, Big School, Small School, ch. xii; Jacquetta Hill Burnett has written a thoughtful analysis of "Ceremony, Rites, and Economy in the Student System of an American High School."

50. Alford, "School District Reorganization," 362.

51. "Letter from the East," New Yorker, Mar. 27, 1971, 36.

52. Lieberman, Future of Public Education, 34-36; Levin, ed., Community Control.

53. Alford, "School District Reorganization," 353.

54. Vidich and Bensman, Small Town (1960), p. x.

Part Two

1. Philbrick, City School Systems, 17-19; Gear, "Rise of Superintendency," 68; Reller, City Superintendency of Schools, chs. iv-viii; Gilland, Powers and Duties of the City-School Superintendent.

2. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston."

3. Katz, Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools, chs. i-iii; Tyack, "Bureaucracy and the Common School"; Dalby and Werthman, eds., Bureaucracy in Historical Perspective.

4. Philbrick, *City School Systems*.

5. Perkinson, *Imperfect Panacea*, ch. iii.

6. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 14, 139, 427; Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 479; Jackson and Schultz, eds., *Cities*, 99.

7. Still, *Milwaukee*, 230-53; Wirth, "Urbanism."

8. Richardson, "To Control the City," 272, 273-89.

9. Grund, *Aristocracy in America*, 162; Dwight, *Travels*, IV, 449-52, 466-68; Tyack, *Ticknor*, 13-18, ch. vi.

10. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 37; *Common School Journal*, VII (1845), 344-45; Caldwell and Courtis, *Then and Now in Education*, 103.

11. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 227-39; Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools*, 59-62; *Reports of the Annual Visiting Committees of the Public Schools of the City of Boston, 1845*, as reproduced in Caldwell and Courtis, *Then and Now in Education*, 165, 185-86, 226-27. For conciseness and uniformity I will hereafter cite city school reports in this abbreviated form: *Boston School Report for 1845*.

12. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 189-90; *Boston School Report for 1845*, 165-264, 206-10.

13. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 260-62; William B. Fowle, as quoted in *ibid*., 264; Ticknor, "Free Schools."

14. *Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Education* (Boston); Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 239-73.

15. *Boston School Report for 1845*, 203, 168, 173.

16. *Ibid*., 194-98; on the immunity of the masters, see *Boston School Report for 1903*, 20.

17. *Boston School Report for 1845*, 201-206.

18. Nash, *Philadelphia Public Schools*, 18, 20-21, 25, 28-33; Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 16.

19. Herrick, *Chicago Schools*, 37, 26, 36.

20. *Ibid*., 28-29, 37-38.

21. *Ibid*., 38, 39-50.

22. Marble, "City School Administration," 166, 165; W. A. Mowry, *Recollections*, 9; Lazerson, *Urban School*, ch. i; Wohl, "The

'Country Boy' Myth."

23. Philbrick, City School Systems, 58-59, 8, 57, 8, 10-11; Draper, "School Administration," 27.

24. Philbrick, City School Systems, 47.

25. Tyack, "Forming the National Character," 83-92; Kaestle, "Urban School System: New York," 342, 366-67.

26. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 183-85; Bishop, Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools of Boston (1852), 6, as quoted in ibid., 271.

27. Philbrick, City School Systems, 115-16; Kaestle, "Urban School System: New York," ch. v; Katz, Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools, 70-71.

28. Gear, "Rise of Superintendency," ch. ix; Wesley, NEA; Schmid, "Organizational Structure of NEA"; Kaestle, "Urban School System: New York," chs. iv, v.

29. Wade, Urban Frontier, 314, 317; St. Louis School Report for 1857, 324-29, 354-69; Tyack, "Kingdom of God and the Common School," 456-57, 463-64.

30. St. Louis School Report for 1871, 31-32.

31. Philbrick, City School Systems, 21-22.

32. Barnard, "Gradation of Public Schools," 456, 457-58.

33. Bunker, Reorganization, 19-24.

34. Philbrick, "Report of the Superintendent (1856)," 263; Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 209-21.

35. Bunker, Reorganization, 35; Shearer, Grading of Schools, 21, 18; Bishop, Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools of Boston (1852), as quoted in Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 219; Goodlad and Anderson, Nongraded Elementary School, 44-49.

36. Philbrick, City School Systems, 67, 59; Cremin, "Curriculum-Making."

37. Herrick, Chicago Schools, 42-43.

38. W. T. Harris, "Elementary Education," 32-34; Philbrick, City School Systems, 65; Finkelstein, "Governing the Young."

39. Portland School Report for 1874, 4; Portland School Report for 1877, 16.

40. Portland School Report for 1874, 8-9; Powers and Corning, "Education in Portland," 45, 327.

41. Portland School Report for 1878, 16-18; Portland School Report for 1882, 37-39; Dillon, "Portland Public Schools," 26-27.

42. Emerson E. White, as quoted in Button, "Supervision in the Public Schools," 33; Philbrick, City School Systems, 47.

43. On the hidden curriculum, see Fantini and Weinstein, The Disadvantaged; Dreeben, On What Is Learned in School; W. T. Harris and Doty, Theory of Education in the U.S., 14.

44. Portland School Report for 1876, 8-9; Powers and Corning, "Education in Portland," 51; Portland School Report for 1881, 29; Portland School Report for 1882, 27-28. In 1899 A. E. Winship, editor of the Journal of Education, decided that the best analogy for the school superintendent was the train conductor whose "watch is the only standard" on the pedagogical train; Winship, "What the Superintendent Is Not."

45. Macrae, Americans at Home, 601-603.

46. Report of the Committee Appointed to Visit the Public Schools of Philadelphia, New York, Brooklyn and Boston, as quoted in Finkelstein, "Governing the Young," 373-75, 378.

47. "July, 1868, Two Representative Schools," as quoted in Finkelstein, "Governing the Young," 381-84; Greer, Great School Legend, 36-37.

48. Finkelstein, "Governing the Young," 134-35; I shall return to the use of educational science in Part Four below.

49. Rice, Public School System, 98.

50. Krug, High School, 3-6; Herrick, Chicago Schools, 41.

51. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics, 207; Krug, High School, 13-14; Herrick, Chicago Schools, 82.

52. Philbrick, City School Systems, 23, 26-27; Katz, Irony of Early School Reform, 39; Troen, "Success of Popular Education," 11; Krug, High School, 12-13.

53. Committee of Ten, Report, 41; Krug, High School, 11-12; Philbrick, City School Systems, 31.

54. W. T. Harris, "Elementary Education," 6-8; Elsbree, American Teacher, ch. xxiii; Payne, School Supervision, 42-43; Krug, High School, 3-6; Herrick, Chicago Schools, 41.

55. Payne, School Supervision, 13-14, 17; Barnard, "Gradation of Public Schools," 461, 459.

56. "School Mistress"; Gove, "Limitations of the Superintendents' Authority," 154; Elsbree, American Teacher, 201, 203.

57. Button, "Supervision in the Public Schools," 32; Warfield, "How to Test the Quality of a Teacher's Work"; Anderson, "Qualification and Supply of Teachers," 423-30; Portland School Report for 1881, 31-37.

58. Coffman, *Social Composition of the Teaching Population*, 82, 28. In *The Political Life of American Teachers* Harmon Zeigler reports that "maintaining discipline is much more of a problem for male teachers than for female teachers; indeed, one suspects that the crisis in authority is related to the recruitment of male teachers" (24).

59. Elsbree, *American Teacher*, 554; Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 127; *Report of the Committee on Salaries* (NEA), 52.

60. Elsbree, *American Teacher*, 431-35, 278; *Report of the Committee on Salaries* (NEA), 23, 54, 74.

61. U.S. Commissioner of Education, *Report for 1873*, cxxxii-cxxxiv; *Report for 1887*, 225; *Report for 1892*, II, 669-71. (For the sake of conciseness and uniformity, I shall cite in this abbreviated form the annual reports of the Commissioner of Education which were published in Washington by the Government Printing Office. These reports covered educational matters for the *school* year [e.g., 1898-99]; in all cases, I shall refer to the latter year in citations.) Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 127-30; Strachan, *Equal Pay*.

62. Hamilton [Dodge], *Common School System*, 96, 99, 123, 302-303.

63. *Ibid.*, 309, 310-11, 315.

64. U.S. Commissioner of Education, *Report for 1901*, II, 2407; deFord, *They Were San Franciscans*, 136-45; Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 245-46; Reid, "Professionalization of Public School Teachers"; Strachan, *Equal Pay*; Elsbree, *American Teacher*, 451.

65. *Portland School Report for 1888*, 29-30.

66. *Rules and Regulations and Course of Study, District No. 1, Portland* (1883).

67. Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 56; *San Francisco School Report for 1869*, 54, as quoted in Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 82; Reller, *City Superintendency of Schools*, chs. i-vi; Gilland, *Powers and Duties of the City-School Superintendent*.

68. Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 57-58.

69. Gilbert, *School and Its Life*, 85, 83; Gilbert, "Freedom of the Teacher," 165-67.

70. Gilbert, *School and Its Life*, 86-87. On goal displacement and other problems common in bureaucracy, see Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*.

71. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States*, 164-65; see also Cremin, *Cubberley*.

72. For samplings of current dissent, see Gross and Gross, eds., *Radical School Reform*; and Carnoy, ed., *Schooling in a Corporate Society*.

73. Hinsdale, *Our Common Schools*, 32, 28-29, 30-31.

74. Adams, "Scientific Common School Education"; C. W. Eliot,

"Undesirable and Desirable Uniformity," 82, 86; Hamilton [Dodge], Common School System, 91.

75. Rice, Public School System, 23.

76. Ibid., 95, 31-33, 60.

77. Gilbert, School and Its Life, 223-24, 225.

78. Oregonian, Feb. 9, Feb. 23, 1880.

79. Ibid., Feb. 21, 1880; an examination of the Portland School Board minutes for the period suggests that actually the Directors took a very detailed, not to say picayune, interest in managing the schools --e.g., resolution of Sept. 28, 1883, concerning the monthly reports of the principals on efficiency of teachers, or the discussion on Sept. 17, 1884, about rules for use of the school library.

80. Oregonian, July 31, 1879.

81. Ibid., Feb. 19, 1880.

82. Ibid., Feb. 18, Mar. 1, 1880; it must be admitted that some of Scott's charges were ill-tempered and unfair.

83. Haskins, Reports, 4-5, as quoted in Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 517; letter of Bishop John Hughes to Bishop Anthony Blanc of New Orleans, Aug. 27, 1840, and Hughes, Complete Works, 105, 116, as quoted in Kaestle, "Urban School System: New York," 311, 314, 315; Tyack, "Onward Christian Soldiers," 212-55.

84. Hughes, Complete Works, 62, and Putnam's Monthly, II (July 1853), 2, both as quoted in Kaestle, "Urban School System: New York," 315-16, 294.

85. Bourne, Public School Society of New York, 202-24, as quoted in Katz, Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools, 13; Lannie, Public Money and Parochial Education.

86. Billington, Protestant Crusade, ch. xiv; Tyack, "Kingdom of God and the Common School," 447-69.

87. Spear, Religion and the State, 371; Dorchester, Romanism, 47, 97.

88. Billington, Protestant Crusade, ch. vi; Dorchester, Romanism, 85, 115ff; Higham, Strangers in the Land, 28-29.

89. I have developed some parallels and differences with black power in my article, "Catholic Power, Black Power, and the Schools."

90. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 501-502, 489; Katz, Irony of Early School Reform, 19-50, 272-79; Shotwell, Schools of Cincinnati, 289-97.

91. Skidmore, Rights of Man to Property, 369; Greeley, Hints Toward Reforms, 219; Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators, 199.

92. Jones, "Politician and Public School," 810, 812; Gilland, *Powers and Duties of the City-School Superintendent*, ch. vi; Reller, *City Superintendent of Schools*, ch. viii; Cronin, *Big City School Boards*, chs. iii-v; Yaeger, "School Boards," 974.

93. For discussions of how similar issues influenced the police in New York and Boston, see Richardson, *New York Police*, and Lane, *Policing the City*. For other studies of the force of symbolic issues in politics, see Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade*, and Kleppner, *Cross of Culture*.

94. Cronin, *Big City School Boards*, ch. iii; Reller, *City Superintendency of Schools*, 150, 156; Gear, "Rise of Superintendency," 17-19.

95. *Buffalo School Report for 1887*, 42-43, as quoted in Reller, *City Superintendency of Schools*, 151; *ibid*., 152, 156.

96. Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 15-16; Richardson, "To Control the City," 276-77.

97. Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 15; Reller, *City Superintendency of Schools*, 162-63 (the description of Greenwood is in Reller's words); Dabney so described the Birmingham board situation in *Universal Education in the South*, II, 402-404.

98. Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 54; W. T. Harris, "City School Supervision."

99. Gear, "Rise of Superintendency," 160-62.

100. Abelow, *Maxwell*, 28; Palmer, *New York Public Schools*, 274; Berrol, "Immigrants at School," chs. i, iii.

101. As quoted in Reller, *City Superintendency of Schools*, 164-67; Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 59.

102. *Boston School Report for 1903*, 20-21; *Los Angeles School Report for 1870*, as quoted in James, "History of Los Angeles School System," 8.

103. Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," chs. iii-v; Rice, *Public School System*, 149-50; Nash, *Philadelphia Public Schools*, ch. ii.

104. See, for example, Finkelstein, "Governing the Young," 380-84; in *Public School System*, Rice found even more rigidity in cities run by corrupt school boards than in cities like Indianapolis in which superintendents enjoyed considerable power.

105. Jones, "Politician and Public School," 814-15, 813; Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 116.

106. Swett, *Public School System of California*, 78; *San Francisco School Report for 1880*, 423; *San Francisco School Report for 1892*, 130-31, 132.

107. Ibid., 146; San Francisco School Report for 1897, 4 (pasted onto the page); Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 227-63.

108. Shaw, "Public Schools of Boss-Ridden City," 4461-62.

109. Ibid., 4462-63.

110. Nash, Philadelphia Public Schools, 58-61; Shaw, "Public Schools of Boss-Ridden City," 4460; Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform," 379; Issel, "Teachers and Educational Reform," 220-23.

111. Hammack, "Centralization of New York City's Public School System," ch. iii. In Mayor Strong's papers at the New York Public Library, Box 6147 contains letters to Strong advocating or opposing the bill to eliminate the powers of the ward boards; Box 6063 contains public speeches and publicity. In the following notes, I will cite the author of the letter or speech, the date, and the box number.

112. Matthew J. Elgas, "Arguments Against 'The Compromise School Bill,'" Apr. 18, 1896, Box 6063; letter of Jacob W. Mach [??] to Mayor Strong, Apr. 16, 1896, Box 6147.

113. Letter of E. Slight to Mayor Strong, Apr. 10, 1896, Box 6147; "School Trustees and the Children," statement of W. T. Nicholson [??] to Mayor Strong, no date, Box 6063.

114. Letter of W. Phinley [??] to Mayor Strong, Apr. 17, 1896, Box 6063; unsigned and undated statement, p. 4, Box 6063 (Hammack ["Centralization of New York City's Public School System," 124] says that this was probably written by Board of Education President MacKay).
In 1908 in a very thorough study of ethnicity in New York schools, the Immigration Commission discovered that 71% of the pupils had foreign-born fathers; 47.2% of teachers had foreign-born fathers, and 7.9% were themselves born abroad. Of the 7,029 teachers who were children of immigrants, 2,297 had Irish parents; 1,194, German parents. It seems likely that a dozen years earlier the percentage of immigrants' children serving as teachers was not less than 50% (U.S. Immigration Commission, Children of Immigrants, IV, 610, 615).

115. Printed circular, "'School Reform!!!'" (distributed to teachers), Box 6063 (??).

116. Philbrick, City School Systems, 117; Haley, "Why Teachers Should Organize."

117. "'School Reform!!!" Box 6063; Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 109-10; Vare, My Forty Years in Politics, 19; Glazer and Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot, 226.

118. Dorsett, Prendegast Machine, 41; McKitrick, "Corruption," 505-508; Merton, Social Theory, 71-82; Vare, My Forty Years in Politics, 118-19; Mandelbaum, Boss Tweed's New York, 69; Cornwell, "Bosses, Machines, and Ethnic Groups," 28-34.

119. Salmon, *Patronage*; Shaw, "Public Schools of Boss-Ridden City," 4464; Holli, *Reform in Detroit*, 27-28.

120. "Confessions of Public School Teachers"; "Confessions of Three School Superintendents"; Steffens, *Autobiography*, 451; *Portland Oregonian*, Sept. 23, 24, Oct. 28, 1894.

121. Herrick, *Chicago Schools*, 77-79, 101; Reid, "Professionalization of Public School Teachers," ch. iii.

122. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade*, 13-24, ch. vii; for a discussion of projective politics by Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Lipset, see D. Bell, ed., *Radical Right*, 98-101, 308-20; Mayo, "Object Lessons," 7, 9; Jay, "Public and Parochial Schools," 172; Zalmon Richards, NEA, *Addresses and Proceedings for 1894*, 300; NEA, *Addresses and Proceedings for 1887*, 136; NEA, *Addresses and Proceedings for 1904*, 361; Samuel Lockwood, NEA, *Addresses and Proceedings for 1869*, 19; E. E. White, "Religion in the School," 297; Cook, comp., *Nation's Book in the Nation's Schools*, 30, 41, 43, 44, 97, 125, 172, 175. Elizabeth Cook's organization had published a collection of passages from the Bible approved by a panel of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. A similar, though more eclectic book of devotional readings (including even a section from the Book of Mormon) was edited by Thomas Dill, following the Cincinnati controversy about the Bible (Dill, ed., *Outlines of Moral Exercises for Public Schools*).

123. Strong, *Our Country*, 55, passim; Stevenson, *Religion and Schools*, 87-94.

124. Merk, "Boston's Historic Public School Crisis," 182-83.

125. For transcripts of the Cincinnati case of *Minor* v. *Board of Education*, see *The Bible in the Public Schools*; Kleppner, *Cross of Culture*, 168.

126. Fishman, *Language Loyalty*, 233-36.

127. Shotwell, *Schools of Cincinnati*, 291-93, 301; *Cincinnati School Report for 1900*, 64.

128. *St. Louis School Report for 1875*, 114-15; *St. Louis School Report for 1866*, 37; *St. Louis School Report for 1878*, 67; *St. Louis School Report for 1875*, 111-13.

129. Fishman, *Language Loyalty*, 234-35; *Chicago School Report for 1900*, 235, 239.

130. Fishman, *Language Loyalty*, 236; emphasis added.

131. Andersson and Boyer, *Bilingual Schooling*, I, 17; *Proceedings of the Board of School Directors, Milwaukee*, May 14, 1915, 434; Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 108; *San Francisco School Report for 1875*, 145, 56-57; Claxton et al., *San Francisco Survey*, 560-61.

132. Pierce, *History of Chicago, 1871-1893*, III, 367-68, 385; Fishman, *Language Loyalty*, 236; Kleppner, *Cross of Culture*, 158-68.

133. Reller, City Superintendency of Schools, ch. vii.

134. Ibid., 173; Johnson, "Captain of Education"; Gove, "Trail of the City Superintendent," 219; Gove, "Duties of City Superintendents," 26-33; Gove, "Limitations of the Superintendents' Authority," 152-57; Gove, "Contributions to the History of American Teaching (II)."

135. Boston Primary School Report for 1847, 10; Fishel, "The North and the Negro," chs. iv, v, vii; Weinberg, Race and Place.

136. Christian Recorder, Feb. 2, 1881, as quoted in Silcox, "Pursuit of Black Education," 16; New National Era, May 2, 1872, as quoted in Foner, ed., Frederick Douglass, IV, 288-90.

137. Woodson, Education of the Negro; Litwak, North of Slavery, 113-52; Heller, "Negro Education in Indiana"; Goodwin, "Schools for the Colored Population, District of Columbia," 222, 201.

138. New York Superintendent's Report for 1849, 12-13; H. H. Bell, "Negroes in California, 1849-1859."

139. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 300-301; Mabee, "A Negro Boycott," 341.

140. Mabee, "A Negro Boycott," 347, 352; Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 338-39. School examiners found justification for the charge of prejudice when they visited the school of a white master: "It is to be regretted that the present incumbent has not more faith in the desire of the colored population for the education of their children, and in the capacities of the children themselves . . ." (see Caldwell and Courtis, Then and Now in Education, 186).

141. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 340-41; Boston Primary School Report for 1847, 1, 23, 13, 7, 14, 5.

142. Darling, "Prior to Little Rock," 129, 142; Mabee, "A Negro Boycott," 355-61.

143. Fishel, "The North and the Negro"; A. O. White, "Jim Crow Education."

144. Stephenson, Race Distinctions, 177; Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 115-20; San Francisco School Report for 1875, 58, 133.

145. Homel, "Black Education," 11-12, 7; Stephenson, Race Distinctions, 179-80; Meier and Rudwick, "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: Alton."

146. Thornbrough, "The Negro in Indiana," 318, 321-22, 323, 326-29, 332.

147. Ibid., 333-34, 337-38; Green, Secret City, 102, 110, 134-36; Penniman, "Overcrowding," 289-95; Hose, "Schoolhouse," 259-70.

148. Dixon, "Education of the Negro in New York," 62; U.S. Immigration Commission, Children of Immigrants, I, 8-13, 129-33.

149. Meier and Rudwick, "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: East Orange"; Parks, *Learning Tree*, ch. viii; Green, *Secret City*, 131; Terrell, "High School for Negroes in Washington."

150. Calkins, "Black Education: Cincinnati, 1850-87," 5-11.

151. Aptheker, ed., *History of the Negro People*, 399-401; Thurston, "Ethiopia Unshackled: Education of Negro Children in New York," 219-20.

152. Thurston, "Ethiopia Unshackled: Education of Negro Children in New York," 220-22; Dixon, "Education of the Negro in New York," 63-65, 67-68.

153. Goodwin, "Schools for the Colored Population, District of Columbia," 261; Dabney, *Schools for Negroes, District of Columbia*, 199-205, 216; Green, *Secret City*, 135.

154. G. L. Mann, "Education for Negroes in Saint Louis," ch. iv; Troen, "Education and the Negro: St. Louis," 2-6; Gersman, "Separate but Equal: St. Louis," 6.

155. Gersman, "Separate but Equal: St. Louis," 6; Troen, "Education and the Negro: St. Louis," 2-6.

156. Troen, "Education and the Negro: St. Louis," 12-14.

157. *Ibid.*, 11; Gersman, "Separate but Equal: St. Louis," 18-19.

158. Gersman, "Separate but Equal: St. Louis," 28; DuBois, *Philadelphia Negro*, 89-90.

159. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 213-14.

160. Andrews, *New York African Free-Schools*, 120, 132; Baker, *Following the Color Line*, 39; DuBois, *Philadelphia Negro*, 100, 126; Gersman, "Separate but Equal: St. Louis," 16.

161. Meier and Rudwick, "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: East Orange," 24, 26; Cubberley, *State and County Educational Reorganization*, 4, as quoted in Newby and Tyack, "Victims Without Crimes," 197; J. B. Sears and Henderson, *Cubberley*.

162. W. T. Harris, "Elementary Education," 3-4, 54. The panic of 1873 did not much influence the rising curve of enrollments and expenditures; Tyack, "Education and Social Unrest, 1873-1878."

163. W. T. Harris, "Elementary Education," 4-6, 11, 16. In 1870 the U.S. Commissioner of Education reported the replies of employers, workingmen, and other observers to questions about the effects of common schooling (*Report for 1870*, 447-66). The great majority agreed that a small amount of common schooling made a great difference in the ability of citizens to continue their self-education.

164. Philbrick, *City School Systems*, 19-22; B. Sears, *Objections to the Public Schools*; *Portland Oregonian*, Feb. 21, 1880. P. M. G. Harris observes that innovators in business in the nineteenth century were likely to "come more frequently from fairly simple homes than

have more ordinary directors of business enterprise" and that the contemporary screening of recruits on the basis of "post-graduate business education" may lessen "initiative and creative talent" ("Social Origins of American Leaders," 212-13).

On the self-made man ideology see Wyllie, Self-Made Man, ch. iii.

165. Troen, "Popular Education in St. Louis," 4, 8, 12, 17.

166. Ibid., 11, 18-21; William Miller, Men in Business.

167. W. T. Harris and Doty, Theory of Education in the U.S., 12; Eaton, Relation of Education to Labor, 117, 121; M. P. Mann and Peabody, Moral Culture, 107-108.

168. Journal of Education, XVI (1882), 361, as quoted in Lazerson, Urban School, 30; Wade, "Violence in the Cities," 7-26.

169. H. Mann, Life and Works, IV, 345; U.S. Commissioner of Education, Report for 1877, p. viii; NEA, Addresses and Proceedings for 1877, 6; Everett, Orations and Speeches, II, 318; Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators, 215.

170. H. Mann, Life and Works, IV, 354-55, 364-65; Portland School Report for 1880, 34-35; Portland Oregonian, Feb. 25, 1880.

171. Boston, School Documents, 1889, No. 5, 39-46, as quoted in Lazerson, Urban School, 33; Northrup, "Report," 35; Ensign, Compulsory School Attendance, 204.

172. Report for 1873, as quoted in Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 173; Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," chs. x-xi; San Francisco School Report for 1854, 31-32; San Francisco Schools Circular No. 52, 1884; Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 120-23, 345-53.

173. Schultz, "Education of Urban Americans: Boston," 501, 470-71; "Immigration," as quoted in Katz, School Reform: Past and Present, 135; Report to the Primary School Committee, June 15, 1846, on the Petition of Sundry Colored Persons, 5.

174. Ensign, Compulsory School Attendance, 63; Abbott and Breckinridge, Truancy and Non-attendance in Chicago, 60-62; Herrick, Chicago Schools, 60-62, 64, 66; Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 177-80; Perrin, Compulsory Education, ch. iii.

175. Herrick, Chicago Schools, 58; Philbrick, City School Systems, 154-55.

176. Philbrick, City School Systems, 185-87; Berkowitz, "Educational Rights of Children"; Ensign, Compulsory School Attendance, 173; W. T. Harris, "Elementary Education," 21-24; Drost, Snedden, 67, 72-74, 77.

177. Rothman, Discovery of the Asylum, 64-66, 285.

178. Ibid., 188, 235; Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators, 318-21.

179. W. T. Harris and Doty, *Theory of Education in the U.S.*, 12-13; Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools*; for the bureaucratization of welfare services, see Lubove, *Professional Altruist*.

180. NEA, *Addresses and Proceedings for 1890*, 309.

181. *Ibid.*, 310-12.

182. *Public Schools and Their Administration*, 40.

Part Three

1. Draper, "Plans of Organization," 1.

2. Draper, *Crucial Test*, 4-5; Chamberlain, "City School Superintendent," 401.

3. Cronin, "Board of Education," chs. iv, v; Morehart, *Legal Status*, 11; Morrison, *Legal Status*, ch. ii; Rollins, *School Administration*, 24-31, for useful statistical charts; Cubberley, *Public School Administration*, ch. viii; D. Mowry, "Milwaukee School System," 141-51; Moehlman, *Public Education in Detroit*, 173-80.

4. Douglass, *Status of the City Superintendent*; Theisen, *City Superintendent*.

5. Hays, "Politics of Reform," 159, 163. For a literate and thorough study of the philosophical and pedagogical side of "progressivism" see Cremin, *Transformation of the School*. In *Education and the Cult of Efficiency*, Callahan calls attention to structural reforms, but his preoccupation with the single notion of business efficiency tends to obscure other elements of the strategy of the "administrative progressives." In *Education and the New America*, Kimball and McClellan offer fascinating leads for historians interested in tracing the genesis and impact of a non-child-centered "progressivism." Wiebe suggests some insightful ways to link educational and political-social history in "Social Functions of Public Education." Educational historians would do well to ponder the questions posed by Peter F. Filene in "An Obituary for 'the Progressive Movement,'" 20-34.

6. Spring, *Education and the Corporate State*; Randall, "Progressivism"; Korman, *Industrialization*.

7. C. W. Eliot, "Educational Reform," 217, 219, 220.

8. C. W. Eliot, "School Board Reform," 3; Draper, "Plans of Organization," 304-305; C. W. Eliot, "Educational Reform," 222.

9. Draper, "Plans of Organization," 299-300; Draper, "Common Schools in the Larger Cities."

10. C. W. Eliot, "Educational Reform," 218; Handlin, *Dewey's Challenge to Education*; C. W. Eliot, " School Board Reform," 3.

11. Dutton and Snedden, Administration of Public Education, 122-23.

12. Holli, Reform in Detroit, 162, 178-79, 172-75; Cubberley, Changing Conceptions of Education, 15.

13. Holli, Reform in Detroit, 178-81. In most school surveys, like Cubberley's of Portland in 1913, the administrative progressives did not argue that the school board should pay less for education; rather, lay elites and professionals both commonly agreed that it would cost more to make the schools "socially efficient," but that it was worth it. On educational reform as social sanitation, see D. F. White, "Education in the Turn-of-the-Century School," 169-82.

14. Hammack, "Centralization of New York City's Public School System," 30-31; Butler's Educational Review became the major house organ for elite reform, but the administrative progressives also employed newspapers and popular magazines to reach the public.

15. Butler, "Editorial," 201; Wesley, NEA, App. A; Maxwell, "Professor Hinsdale," 186-88.

16. Correspondence of Butler and Gaynor, Educational Review, XLII (Sept. 1911), 204-10; W. Mowry, "Powers and Duties of School Superintendents," 49-50; Mosely Commission Report.

17. University of Chicago, University Record, I (May 1903), 239, as quoted in McCaul, "Dewey's Chicago," 265; Chicago Merchants' Club, Public Schools, 45; Thwing, "New Profession," 33.

18. J. B. Sears and Henderson, Cubberley, 63-73; Callahan, Education and Cult of Efficiency, ch. viii.

19. The clearest index of these new values are the dozens of theses on administration published under the auspices of Teachers College, Columbia, especially those sponsored by George Strayer. A number of theses are cited in this chapter.

20. Herney, "Movement to Reform Boston School Committee," 7; Berrol, "Maxwell"; DeWeese, "Better School Administration," 61; J. B. Sears, School Survey.

21. The Montague correspondence with leading educators is deposited in the Oregon Historical Society; Drost, Snedden, 145; Hanus, Adventuring in Education.

22. Scott, "Conference," 396; Sol Cohen, Progressives and Urban School Reform, 27.

23. Addresses Delivered at a Joint Meeting, 29, 15-16; Sol Cohen, Progressives and Urban School Reform, 4.

24. The speeches quoted in Chicago Merchants' Club, Public Schools, give a good idea of the educational ideology of leading businessmen in Boston, New York, Chicago, and St. Louis.

25. Hays, "Politics of Reform," 165.

26. Cubberley, Public School Administration, 93-94; W. T. Harris, "City School Supervision," 168-69. In an article on "The Modern City Superintendent," Charles Moore repeated Harris's categories of successful men, cranks, and "politicians" as if it were proven gospel.

27. Chancellor, Our Schools, 12-13; Cubberley, speech to 54th annual NEA meeting, 1915, 97.

28. Counts, Social Composition, 96.

29. Nearing, "Who's Who," 89-90; Struble, " School Board Personnel," 48-49, 137-38; Counts, Social Composition. For some cautions in the use of such data see Charters, "Social Class Analysis," 268-83.

30. Boston School Report for 1874, 25; Educational Review, XLII (Sept. 1911), 205-206.

31. Boston School Report for 1874, 27; W. Mowry, "Powers and Duties of School Superintendents," 41-42; Wetmore, "Boston School Administration," 107; Chicago Merchants' Club, Public Schools, 26.

32. Nearing, "Workings of a Large Board of Education," 44-46; Gilland, Powers and Duties of the City-School Superintendent, ch. vi.

33. Hubbert, "Centralization," 968.

34. Forcey, Crossroads of Liberalism, ch. xiv; Toulmin Smith, Local Self-Government, 12; Olin, "Public School Reform in New York," 5-6.

35. Cubberley, Public School Administration.

36. Mack, "Relation of a Board," 980, 984; Committee of Fifteen, "Report," 307.

37. Bobbitt, Denver Survey, 116; Claxton et al., San Francisco Survey, 83-88.

38. Theisen, City Superintendent, 99-100.

39. Prince, "School Supervision," 155; Douglass, Status of the City Superintendent, 124; Morrison, Legal Status, 102.

40. Mendenhall, City School Board Member, 2-4, 50-52.

41. Yeager, "School Boards," 978-79; Cubberley, Public School Administration, 12; Chicago City Council, Recommendations, 22; Rollins, School Administration, 33, 37.

42. Lowell, "Professional and Non-professional," 1001-1002; Ayres, Cleveland Education Survey, 125.

43. Sayre, "Additional Observations," 74-75.

44. For a perceptive discussion of school politics as a "closed system" see Iannaccone, Politics in Education. H. Thomas James and the

staff of the School Board Studies Project compiled an excellent "School Board Bibliography." See also Hays, "Political Parties."

45. Almack, "School Administration," 627. British observers often commented that one-man rule of superintendents tended to shackle teachers; see, for example, Burstall, Impressions of American Education, 10-11, and Mosely Commission Report, 353.

46. For some parallel applications of the corporate model in other institutions of government, see Weinstein, Corporate Ideal.

47. On urban reform strategies generally, see Banfield and Wilson, City Politics, ch. xi.

48. Sol Cohen, Progressives and Urban School Reform, ch. i.

49. Hammack, "Centralization of New York City's Public School System," 27; Olin, "Public School Reform in New York."

50. Hammack, "Centralization of New York City's Public School System," 51-71.

51. Ibid., 71-78.

52. Butler, "Editorial," 196-206; letter from Jacob W. Mack to Mayor Strong, Apr. 16, 1896, Box 6147.

53. Letter from Edward D. Page to Mayor Strong, Apr. 11, 1896, Box 6147.

54. Letter from Arthur M. Lee to Mayor Strong, Apr. 12, 1896, Box 6063; letter to Mayor Strong, Apr. 17, 1896, Box 6063; letter from Julia Richman to Mayor Strong, Apr. 16, 1896, Box 6147.

55. Letter from Edward D. Page to Mayor Strong, Apr. 11, 1896, Box 6147.

56. Letter to Mayor Strong, Apr. 17, 1896, Box 6063.

57. Letter from Nicholas Murray Butler to George C. Austin, Mar. 6, 1896, Butler Papers, Columbia University, as quoted in Hammack, "Centralization of New York City's Public School System," 91; see also Hammack, 92, 95.

58. Letter from Lucy A. Yendes to Mayor Strong, Apr. 9, 1896, Box 6147; letter from E. Slight to Mayor Strong, Apr. 10, 1896, Box 6147; letter from G. W. Arnold to Mayor Strong, Apr. 21, 1896, Box 6147.

59. Butler, "Editorial," 196-206.

60. Berrol, "Immigrants at School"; Berrol, "Maxwell."

61. Shaw, "Public Schools of Boss-Ridden City," 4460-62, 4465; Woodruff, "Corrupt School System," 433-39.

62. Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform," 359-60.

63. Nash, Philadelphia Public Schools, 62-67.

64. Fox, "Philadelphia Progressives," 372-94; Warner, Private City: Philadelphia, chs. ix-xi, pp. 214-15.

65. Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform," 363; Welch, comp., Addresses at Civic Club, 1894, 12.

66. Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform," 365.

67. Taggart's Times, Apr. 28, 1895, as quoted in Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform," 371-72; Woodruff, "Corrupt School System," 439.

68. Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform," 378-80; Nash, Philadelphia Public Schools, 52, 58-61.

69. Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform," 379-82; the later problems of the Philadelphia schools are documented in Odell, Educational Survey for Philadelphia.

70. E. C. Eliot, "School Administration: St. Louis," 465; Gersman, "Progressive Reform," 5-6.

71. Gersman, "Progressive Reform," 8-10.

72. E. C. Eliot, "School Administration: St. Louis," 466-67; E. C. Eliot, "Nonpartisan School Law," 226.

73. The table by Elinor Gersman comes from a ms. draft of "Progressive Reform: St. Louis," 24; E. C. Eliot, "Nonpartisan School Law," 228; Chicago Merchants' Club, Public Schools, 21.

74. St. Louis School Report for 1913, 254-55; E. C. Eliot, "Nonpartisan School Law," 226-27; E. C. Eliot, "School Administration: St. Louis," 465.

75. Callahan, Superintendent, ch. iii; E. C. Eliot, "Nonpartisan School Law," 321; Iannaccone and Lutz, Politics, Power and Policy.

76. Commonwealth Club of Calif., Transactions, 456, 467, 457. When Roncevieri spoke, no one applauded, according to the stenographic report, although almost all others speaking won applause.

77. Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 224, 724-25; Cubberley, "School Situation in San Francisco," 366-68.

78. Holli, Reform in Detroit, 167; Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 295; Cubberley, "School Situation in San Francisco," 372.

79. Cubberley, "School Situation in San Francisco," 373, 376-79; Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 302, 303-307.

80. Cubberley, "School Situation in San Francisco," 379, 381.

81. Collegiate Alumnae, Conditions in Schools of San Francisco, 6, 2, 48; Cremin, Transformation of the School, 202.

82. Claxton et al., San Francisco Survey, 76; Commonwealth Club of Calif., Transactions, 379, 446.

83. Claxton et al., San Francisco Survey, 76, 79; Commonwealth Club of Calif., Transactions, 455, 457.

84. Claxton et al., San Francisco Survey, 83, 88; Commonwealth Club of Calif., Transactions, 432.

85. Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 356; Commonwealth Club of Calif., Transactions, 470-71.

86. Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 414, n. 204; The Monitor, Oct. 18, 1918, as quoted in Senkewicz, "Catholics and Amendment 37," 4.

87. Commonwealth Club of Calif., Transactions, 469.

88. Shradar, "Amenders"; Bosche, "Administration of San Francisco Schools."

89. San Francisco School Bulletin, Nov. 4, 1918, as quoted in Bosche, "Administration of San Francisco Schools," 16-17; Organized Labor, Nov. 2, 1918, as quoted in Senkewicz, "Catholics and Amendment 37," 1; The Leader, Oct. 26, 1918, as quoted in Senkewicz, 5.

90. Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 442; Bosche, "Administration of San Francisco Schools," 19-21; Tyack, "Perils of Pluralism."

91. Shradar, "Amenders," 14-24; Bosche, "Administration of San Francisco Schools," 24-25; Dolson, "San Francisco Public Schools," 443-44.

92. Draper, "Plans of Organization," 1; E. C. Eliot, "Nonpartisan School Law," 229; Cubberley, Changing Conceptions of Education, 56-57.

93. "School Superintendence in Cities," 309-17; Committee of Fifteen, "Report," 304-22. Of course there were some observers who warned against this centralization of power. Frank Wiley, Secretary to the St. Louis Superintendent of Schools, reported that some "students of administrative problems feel that a number of evil consequences will inevitably come from placing the control of our schools in the hands of a body of specialized administrators and thus excluding the people from that participation which they formerly enjoyed. In such a system they see the growth of a bureaucracy with all of its attendant evils, such as the continental countries of Europe have had to contend with. In the provision for uniformity of standards and attainments they see ultimately a suppression of that local initiative to which so much of our educational advance must be ascribed" ("Layman in School Administration," 310). The best general account of the centralization movement is Cronin's "Board of Education."

94. Oxford English Dictionary, 235; Hinsdale, "American School Superintendent," 50; C. W. Eliot, "Undesirable and Desirable Uniformity," 82; Paul Hanus, in Survey Committee on School Inquiry, New York, Report, I, 183.

95. For differences between public bureaucracies and market-

oriented large organizations, see Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*; on bureaucratic dysfunctions, see Merton, *Social Theory*, and Crozier, *Bureaucratic Phenomenon*.

96. Reid, "Professionalization of Public School Teachers," 44-46; *Harper Commission Report*, 1-20; Chicago Merchants' Club, *Public Schools*; Chicago City Council, *Recommendations*.

97. Reid, "Professionalization of Public School Teachers," 188-95; Herrick, *Chicago Schools*, 83-92; Haley, "Why Teachers Should Organize," 148-51.

98. Chicago Merchants' Club, *Public Schools*, 45; Reid, "Professionalization of Public School Teachers," 54-55; Herrick, *Chicago Schools*, 80-81.

99. DeWeese, "Two Years' Progress in Chicago," 336, 326-27; Herrick, *Chicago Schools*, 81. In *Public Education in Detroit* (172-77) Moehlman tells how another astute superintendent, W. G. Martindale, achieved influence without structural reforms.

100. Herrick, *Chicago Schools*, 166, 137-39; Counts, *School and Society in Chicago*, 11-12, 251-56, 261-63, 280-82; Reid, "Professionalization of Public School Teachers," 182-83; Herrick thesis on blacks hired in Chicago; for the later history of Chicago school politics see James Stephen Hazlett, "Crisis in School Government."

101. Vare, *My Forty Years in Politics*, 31, 63-64; Z. L. Miller, *Boss Cox's Cincinnati*, 93; Cronin, "Centralization of the Boston Public Schools," 6; Reid, "Professionalization of Public School Teachers," 182-83.

102. Lowi, *Patronage and Power in New York*, 30-34; Cronin, "Centralization of the Boston Public Schools," 9; Schrag, *Village School Downtown*, 57-59.

103. Counts, *School and Society in Chicago*, chs. vi, xiv; Gompers, "Teachers' Right to Organize," 1083-84.

104. Strayer, "Baltimore School Situation," 340, 337, 341-42; Brown et al., *Education in Baltimore*, 9, 61; Crooks, *Politics and Progress: Baltimore*, 93-99.

105. Callahan, *Superintendent*, 103-106; "Why Superintendents Lose Their Jobs," 18; "The Cleveland Plan," 10-11; "The 'Czar' Movement," 8; "The Cleveland Meeting," 9. See also the following cartoons in the *American School Board Journal*: "Julius Caesar Educationalized: Modern Roman Senate 'Committee of Fifteen,'" X (Apr. 1895), 1; "The Play of Hamlet 'Correlated': An Episode in the Great Educational Controversy," X (Mar. 1895), 1; "The Modern Feast of Herod: The Cleveland Plan, Or the Sacrifice of Sensible School Board Representation," XI (Dec. 1895), 1.

106. Commonwealth Club of Calif., *Transactions*, 455; Higgins, "School Reform in Los Angeles," 6-9.

107. Sol Cohen's Progressives and Urban School Reform (ch. iv) illustrates the frustrations of elite reformers with the persistence of old-style politics after structural reforms. For subsequent studies of decision making in city systems, see Rogers, 110 Livingston Street, and Gittell, Participants and Participation.

Part Four

1. Todd, "Why Children Work," 73-78.

2. Dewey, School and Society, 33; Herrick, Chicago Schools, 114-15, 74; McCaul, "Dewey's Chicago."

3. Maxwell, "Teachers," 11878-79.

4. Ibid., 11877-80; Shaw, "Spread of Vacation Schools," 5405-14.

5. Cremin, Cubberley; Krug, High School.

6. Lazerson, Urban Schools, ch. ix; Katz, Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools, 114-18.

7. Hartmann, Movement to Americanize the Immigrant.

8. Strachan, Equal Pay; Reid, "Professionalization of Public School Teachers."

9. Lubove, Professional Altruist, chs. iv, vii; H. Miller and Smiley, eds., Education in the Metropolis, 1-13; Mills, Sociological Imagination, 9.

10. Geraldine Joncich (Clifford)'s study of Thorndike, The Sane Positivist, gives a detailed and sympathetic view of educational scientists as they saw themselves and their world.

11. Strayer, "Progress in City School Administration," 375-78.

12. U.S. Commissioner of Education, Report for 1889, II, 709; Counts, Selective Character of American Education, 1; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics, 207, 214.

13. U.S. Commissioner of Education: Report for 1889, II, 772; Report for 1890, II, 1318-48; and Biennial Survey, 1920-22, II, 94-114.

14. Wesley, NEA, 278-79; Kinney, Certification in Education, ch. vi; Martens, "Organization of Research Bureaus."

15. Lazerson, Urban School, ch. ii; A. G. Wirth, Education in

Technological Society, chs. ii, v; Riis, Children of the Poor.

16. Letter from Charles Judd to members of the Cleveland Conference, Jan. 14, 1918, Edward C. Elliot Papers, Purdue University, courtesy of Dr. Walter Drost.

17. Krug, High School; Spring, Education and the Corporate State.

18. Cubberley, Changing Conceptions of Education, 56-57; Karier, "Testing for Order." I am indebted to Professor Karier and to his student Russell Marks for their powerful insights into the social philosophy of some of the testers.

19. Cubberley, Public School Administration, 338.

20. Dooley, Ne'er-Do-Well, 8, 13-14, 16-18, 21, 27-28; Snedden, Reform Schools, ch. xii.

21. Caswell, City School Surveys, 26.

22. Committee on School Inquiry, Report, I, 57; Hanus, Adventuring in Education, ch. xii.

23. Cubberley, Portland Survey, 125, 40, 128, 41-42, 46; Cubberley's colleagues were education professors and school administrators, including Edward C. Elliott, Frank E. Spaulding, J. H. Francis, and Lewis Terman.

24. Koos, "School Surveys," 35-41; U.S. Commissioner of Education, Report for 1917, I, 19-21; Pritchett, "Educational Surveys," 118-23; Caswell, City School Surveys, 32.

25. Moley, "Cleveland Surveys," 229-31; Caswell, City School Surveys, 60-72.

26. Bourne, "Portland Survey," 238.

27. Nearing, New Education, 128, 126, 165-69.

28. Kazin, Walker in the City, 17, 22, 18, 21.

29. Dewey, "Individuality," 61-62.

30. For some recent studies of the social role of educational psychologists see Church, "Educational Psychology and Social Reform," 390-405; D. K. Cohen and Lazerson, "Education and Corporate Order"; Sizer, "Testing."

31. Ayres, Laggards, 220.

32. Buckingham, "Child Accounting," 218-19.

33. Ayres, Laggards, 66, 38, 20, 4.

34. Ibid., 106-107, 103, 115.

35. Ibid., 7 (italics are in the original).

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., 199, 170-71.

38. In Centuries of Childhood Philippe Ariès imaginatively tries to reconstruct what early years of life were like before our present preoccupation with "childhood" and schooling.

39. Cremin, Transformation of the School, chs. 5, 8.

40. Terman, "Uses of Intelligence Tests," 26, 30-31.

41. Woody and Sangren, Administration of Testing, 19-21.

42. Spring, "Psychologists and the War," 5, 8-9.

43, For critical interpretations of the social philosophy of the testers see Karier, "Testing for Order," and Marks, "Testing for Social Control."

44. Brigham, American Intelligence, 197, 209.

45. Bond, Education of the Negro, 318; Dearborn, Intelligence Tests, 272-78.

46. Dearborn, Intelligence Tests, 279-80; Spring, "Psychologists and the War," 9-10; Terman, "Uses of Intelligence Tests," 30-31.

47. Woody and Sangren, Administration of Testing, 21; Dickson, Mental Tests and Classroom Teacher, 28.

48. Haggerty, "Recent Developments," 242; Terman, "Problem," 3.

49. Chapman, "Intelligence Testing Movement"; I am much indebted to Mr. Chapman for sharing his sources on the testing movement. See also Terman, "Problem," 1, 3; Brooks, "Uses for Intelligence Tests," 219; Brooks, Improving Schools, ch. x; Pintner and Noble, "Classification of School Children," 726-27.

50. Davis, "Some Problems," 13-15.

51. Hines, "What Los Angeles Is Doing with Testing," 45; Brooks,

Improving Schools, ch. x.

52. Terman, "Problem," 1-29; Deffenbaugh, "Uses of Intelligence and Achievement Tests"; "Cities Reporting the Use of Homogeneous Grouping."

53. Layton, "Group Intelligence Testing Program of Detroit," 125-27.

54. Dickson, "Classification of School Children," 33-35.

55. Ibid., 48-52.

56. Dickson, "Relation of Mental Testing," 72, 75, 85; Dickson, "Use of Mental Tests," 609.

57. Tupper, "Use of Intelligence Tests," 97-98.

58. Ibid., 99-100, 101-102, 92.

59. Corning, After Testing, 12-147, 166-68, 189.

60. D. K. Cohen, "Immigrants and the Schools," 13-28; Covello, Social Background; Bere, Comparative Study of Mental Capacity.

61. Young, Mental Differences, 3-4, ch. iii.

62. Ibid., 65-66.

63. Ibid., 68-69.

64. Ibid., 72.

65. Ibid., 16-17; Covello, Social Background.

66. W. S. Miller, "Administrative Use of Intelligence Tests," 190; Lippmann, "Abuse of Tests," 297.

67. As quoted in Counts, School and Society in Chicago, 185-88.

68. For an excellent, brief account of the early development of intelligence testing see Cronbach, Essentials of Psychological Testing, 197-206.

69. Terman, Measurement of Intelligence, 19.

70. Dickson, Mental Tests and Classroom Teacher, 129; Cubberley, State and County Educational Reorganization, 4, as quoted in Newby and Tyack, "Victims Without Crimes," 197.

71. Daniel, "Aims of Secondary Education," 467; Wilkerson, "Deter-

mination of Problems of Negroes."

72. Davison, "Educational Status of the Negro."

73. Holloway, "Social Conditions."

74. Boyer, Adjustment of a School.

75. Grace, "Effect of Negro Migration."

76. Hutchinson, Immigrants and Their Children.

77. G. Hayes, "Vocational Education," 71-74; Bulkley, "Industrial Condition," 590-96; Speed, "Negro in New York," 1249-50; Blascoeur, Colored Schoolchildren in New York; Osofsky, "Progressivism and the Negro."

78. Caliver, "Certain Significant Developments," 113-15; Caliver, "Negro High School Graduates and Nongraduates," 15.

79. Shamwell, "Vocational Choices." For comparable findings see Lawrence, "Vocational Aspirations."

80. Daniels, "Attitudes Affecting Occupational Affiliation," 45-49.

81. Ibid., 54-56, 57.

82. Ibid., 66-67.

83. Cofer, "We Face Reality in Detroit," 34-37; Committee of Teachers, Negro Employment; DuBois, "Northern Public Schools," 205-208; Wilkerson, "Occupational Efficiency," 7.

84. Wilkerson,"Negro in American Education"; Porter, "Negro Education in Northern and Border Cities," 33-39.

85. Haney, Registration, 67; Hardin, Negroes of Philadelphia, 104.

86. Spaulding, School Superintendents, 617-19.

87. Grace, "Effect of Negro Migration," 68-69; Beckham, "Attendance," 18-29.

88. DuBois, "Pechstein," 313-14; DuBois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?" 328-39, 331; Sinette, "The Brownies' Book"; Woodson, "Negro Life and History."

89. Wilkerson, "The Status of Negro Education," 226.

90. Dewey, Educational Situation.

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